The Asiatic Society
CALCUTTA-16

DR. CHUNI LAL BOSE COLLECTION

DONATED BY HIS GRANDSON
DR. A. K. BASU,

WORKS BY ROBY DATTA.

1. **Echoes from East and West to which are added Stray Notes of Mine Own** (Galloway and Porter, Cambridge, 1909). Cloth, Crown 8vo, 352 pages. 3*s*. 6*d*. [To be had of DAS GUPTA & Co., 54-3, College St., Calcutta.]

The volume contains poetical renderings from masterpieces in 16 Indo-European languages, and is the first great contribution to Comparative Poetry. It has been highly spoken of in the English and the Indian Press.

Prof. E. Dowden wrote (1910):—"It is full of interest for me, and I wonder at the breadth of your scholarship and your accomplishment as a writer of English verse."

2. **Sakuntala and Her Keepsake rendered from the Sanskrit Play of Kalidasa** (Das Gupta & Co., Calcutta, 1915). Cloth, Crown 8vo, 168 pages. 12 as.

The rendering is in poetical prose and verse, and has been highly spoken of in the Press.

Mr. Arthur Symons wrote (1908):—"You are a real poet, and have a wonderful command of the English language. Your 'Sakuntala' is far superior to the two English versions [of Jones and Monier-Williams].....It will take rank among the best translations in English literature." "Your work is a masterpiece."

3. **Poems, Pictures and Songs to which is prefixed The Philosophy of Art** (Ready for print). Some of these have appeared in periodicals.

4. **Stories in Blank Verse to which is added An Epic Fragment** (Ready for print). Some of these have appeared in periodicals.

CORRECTIONS IN THE "ECHOES."

P. x, l. 1, *read* pitted against; l. 14, *read* point of view. P. 13, note, *read* Griffith's. P. 15, l. 14, *read* movements of the battle. P. 21, l. 28, *read* wherefore cometh grief on thee? P. 23, note, *read* maintaining. P. 33, l. 2, *read* Take leave here of the earth. P. 37, top, *read* Béranger. P. 39, l. 21, *read* You, too, it behoveth. P. 45, l. 31, *read* may not stay. P. 47, l. 5, *read* Strewing. P. 65, l. 27, *read* Bamhan. P. 79, note, *read* "My Study Windows." P. 82, note, *read* Macdonell's. P. 95, note, *read* Camoëns. P. 98, top, *read* Camoëns; l. 12, *read* pillage round. P. 99, note, *read* Camoëns' model. P. 101, note, *read* Camoëns. P. 106, ll. 17, 22, 27, *read* scarce it boots me. P. 109, l. 5, *add* From his mishap, distress and poverty, | And in that set his true security. P. 111, l. 4, *read* and also honour. P. 114, l. 13, *read* where he yet is in. P. 115, l. 2, *read* and also hardihood. P. 132, l. 8, *read* caverns. P. 134, l. 15, *read* moonset-mountain dweller; l. 25, *read* doth ever keep awake; note, *read* is (*for* in). P. 178, l. 1, *read* carve. P. 179, l. 3, *read* Thaïs; l. 9, *read* Héloise. P. 180, note, *read* more Villon. P. 185, l. 24, *read* load. P. 191, l. 24, *read* call'd. P. 195, ll. 2, 4, *read* parsleys. P. 201, l. 5, *read* call'd. P. 203, top, *read Simonides*. P. 219, l. 11, *read* not with God battle. P. 223, note, *read kal* (1st one). P. 230, note, *read* device. P. 241, l. 22, *read* ev'ry. P. 247, l. 16, *read* battle. P. 248, l. 6, *read* fashion'd. P. 250, l. 15, *read* burghers (*for* citizens). P. 251, l. 15, *read* skill. P. 252, note, *read* Spenserian Stanza. P. 253, l. 8, *read* blazon; l. 23, *read* thine ebon bow. P. 260, l. 4, *read* treasure; note, *read* expostulating with atheists. P. 261, l. 10, *read* Suryā; l. 24, *read* call'd. P. 264, l. 21, *read* well-deck'd; l. 26, *read* attain'd. P. 269, l. 1, *read* relates. P. 274, l. 5, *read* unreveal'd. P. 278, l. 1, *read* seëst. P. 286, l. 6, *read* hue. P. 287, l. 7, *read* aught. P. 289, l. 1, *read* When said was all. P. 290, l. 27, *read* goshawk. P. 296, l. 1, *read* the Soma Atiratra. P. 300, note, *read* note that in the Indian. P. 318, l. 16, *read* at the last their turn. P. 328, l. 6, *read* beast. P. 329, l. 20, *read* this too so may. P. 336, note, *read* Ben Jonson. P. 339, l. 8, *read* full-foam'd. P. 340, top, *omit A triolet.*

Obvious misprints in punctuation etc. are not noted here.

ECHOES FROM EAST AND WEST

ECHOES FROM EAST AND WEST

TO WHICH ARE ADDED STRAY NOTES OF MINE OWN

BY

ROBY DATTA

Sunset smiles on sunrise: east and west are one,
Face to face in heaven before the sovereign sun.
(Swinburne).

Life is the rose's hope while yet unblown;
The reading of an ever-changing tale;
The light uplifting of a maiden's veil;
A pigeon tumbling in clear summer air;
A laughing schoolboy, without grief or care,
Riding the springy branches of an elm.
(Keats).

CAMBRIDGE:
GALLOWAY AND PORTER
1909

DEDICATION.

Come !
To thee,
O long-lost,
O mother mine,
O high in heaven,
This fruit of many years,
From
My tree,
Now sun-gloss'd,
Now dried by shine,
Now shower-driven,
I consecrate with tears !

PREFACE.

THE aim of the "Echoes from East and West" is to produce on an English gramophone some of the finest records of Indo-European songs. It is to wake up at a grind the "music of the moon" that slept "in the plain eggs" of that "nightingale enveloped in the mist of ages," the primitive Aryan of Mid-Asia, whose natural and adopted offspring are scattered over five continents. It is to bring together the voices of some of the Indic, Persic, Hellenic, Italic, Romance, and Teutonic makers of melodies, so that the only notable nestlings here silent are those that chirped through Celtic and Slavonic tongues. It is also to show that a true song floats above race and age and land and may be heard by all. Thanks to the strenuous devotion of eminent scholars, the Muses of Comparative Philology and Comparative Mythology have in recent years lightened up the path of the seeker of poetry and prosody. I should, therefore, invite some far abler man, some future Aryan Palgrave, some soul ever athirst for Beauty and anhungered for Truth, to roam farther and farther afield through literatures and come back with fresher and fresher songs for real lovers of poetry in all English-speaking lands. In the meantime I hope that the public would kindly receive this humble collection of

many years, which I have made as representative as possible within the narrow range of my quest. Naturally enough, I have given the greatest prominence to the earlier part as well as the Northern section of English literature, as it is highly interesting to see the beginnings of modern English literature, which is second to no other in the whole history of the world. Again, the selections from other European literatures have been made in proportion to the interest they may excite in us for their direct or indirect bearing on the poetry of this country. Lastly, I have given some prominence to Indic literatures, because of the present intimate connexion between England, which has absorbed the best part of Greek, Italic, Romance and Teutonic literatures, and India, which has preserved for us the earliest monuments of Aryan culture. I may add that I have ended the volume with "Stray Notes of Mine Own," as they show some of my predilections. Of these poems the one that I care for most is the Sonnet on Milton's "Paradise Lost."

As regards the arrangement of the selected pieces, a few words need be said. I have not thought it fit to present them in the order of the languages, which would give the book a formidable appearance and would not make the poems really effective. I have, therefore, given them in their chronological order of composition, which, I trust, would be found to be also their psychological and poetically effective order. This order, I need hardly say, was not the order in which I learnt the languages. A few verses, however, taken from my translation of Kalidasa's "Sakuntala and her Keepsake," have been interspersed through the volume. Again, as regards the method of rendering, I may say

that all the pieces down to "To the Muse" exhibit what I call the process of version, that is, rendering the sense of the original in my own manner and in a metrical form something like that of the original; while all the rest show what I call the process of translation, that is, rendering the original in the order of its words and in its exactly equivalent metrical form as far as it is in keeping with the true genius of the English language. In a few cases the process of translation has been more or less that of modernisation. The essential thing in these processes, which I have always tried to keep in view, is to fall into the inspiration of the original poet before attempting a rendering. Next, with regard to the prosody, I may say that most of the poems are in recognised English or Anglicised metrical forms, but there are a few poems written in Hexameters, Elegiacs, Alliterative Verse, Assonant Verse, and Unrimed Verse. In translating Classical Lyrical metres, I have given the same number of syllables and the same pauses as the original with an English disposition of accents, with the exception of "The Calm of Nature" from Alcman and "The Crab and the Snake" from a Greek skolion, where I have tried to replace the quantity of the original by the accent in English, as I have done in the case of the Hexameters and Elegiacs. One piece entitled "Baby and Nurse" has been rendered in hexameters, although the original is in a metre full of short syllables. I have introduced rime in translating Classical Sanskrit Quatrains and Pali Quatrains and Sestets, in order to lay stress on the fact that there is a deep rhythmic pause at the end of the second and fourth quarters of the quatrain or the second, fourth and sixth sections of the sestet, and that the uneven quarters

or sections are pitched against each other; but I have not applied this principle in translating Vedic triplets, quatrains, quintuplets and sestets, because there the rhythm and sense seem to me almost confined to each line. Lastly, with regard to foreign names, they are to be pronounced under the English laws of accent, with the exception of a few classical names; and I may add that in accordance with Elizabethan practice, names of Greek gods and goddesses have been given in their more familiar and more easily pronounced Latin forms —only we should not confound Greek and Roman mythology.

It should be remarked that the main features of the book are variety and diversity from the voint of view of language, matter, manner, and metre. Poems have been brought together sometimes for comparison, sometimes for contrast, sometimes for showing evolution of thought, overflow of ideas and sentiments from country to country, and so on. To enhance the interest of the reader, I have introduced a few philosophical poems from the East, and a few devotional poems from both East and West. Wherever the opening or a part of a great poem has been given in these pages, it is implied that some knowledge of the whole will always be found edifying, because of the side-lights thrown on racial characteristics, which are more or less insular, and on human sentiments, which are bound to be universal. In fact, Life in its insular intensity, and in its universal extensity, and—to go a step further—in its eternal protensity, is the highest goal of study in Art. It is this three-sided Life which Homer and Shakespeare saw mostly, but of which a good deal remains a sealed book to us mortals. Do you know of anyone, young or

old, of either sex, of any country, or of any age, barring jealous contemporaries, who, being able to read Shakespeare, did not in the main like him? I do not. I say "in the main" advisedly; because what he or she does not like in Shakespeare is to him or her, but not to all, a sealed book.

In conclusion, I have to discharge the most pleasant duty of expressing my gratitude to the various scholars whose works or lectures or personal contact were of great help to me in attacking the original poems. I should mention in particular three famous scholars of Christ's College, Cambridge, the Rev. Prof. W. W. Skeat, Litt.D., Dr. I. Gollancz, Professor, King's College, London, and Mr. A. J. Wyatt, M.A., who all created in me a taste for the earlier part of English literature. I also sat for Old and Middle French at the feet of Mr. E. G. W. Braunholtz, M.A., and Mr. W. Rippman, M.A.; for Latin at the feet of Mr. E. J. Brooks, M.A., and Mr. S. Bloxsidge, B.A. (Oxon); and for Vedic Sanskrit at the feet of the late Prof. C. Bendall, M.A., and Dr. L. D. Barnett, Professor, University College, London. In my first studies of the French language I received the kind help of the Rev. J. W. Cartmell, M.A., Tutor of Christ's College, and of M. Vital de la Motte, M.A., of Christ's College. My passion for Scottish literature was early bred in me by five Professors, all Scotsmen, under whom I read at Calcutta; there also I learnt Old English from Mr. A. C. Edwards, M.A., and some classics, as well as most of the Eastern languages rendered in these pages. I was encouraged in my renderings of Greek and German by my friend Mr. E. J. Thomas, B.A., of Emmanuel College; and I received the judgment of Mr. J. H. Sleeman, M.A.,

Fellow of Sidney Sussex College, on some of the Classical pieces, and of the Rev. G. T. Manley, M.A., formerly Fellow of Christ's College, on some of the Indian religious and philosophical poems. I should also record here my best thanks to two Frenchmen, M. Florian Cordon and M. Emmanuel Léon Chouville, and a German Swiss, Herr Jacob Gerster, Cand. Med., who often gave me valuable advice. Speaking generally, I learnt the psychological analysis of art from Mr. Carveth Read, M.A., Lecturer of University College, London. Last, but not least, I should mention Mr. Arthur Symons, critic and poet, whose friendship has been of late a constant source of inspiration to me.

ROBY DATTA.

Cambridge.
28th September, 1908.

P.S.—At the suggestion of some friends, among others Mr. G. T. Hales, B.A., and Mr. E. J. Tipping, B.A., a short note has been given at the end of each poem rendered. I hope it will prove interesting to some readers.

R. D.

Cambridge.
25th November, 1908.

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ECHOES FROM EAST AND WEST

Τοῦτ' ἐν ψυχῇ λόγοι,
ὅπερ κάλλος ἐν σώματι.
(ARISTIDES).

(Such in the mind are words,
As beauty in the body is.)

Io cominciai: Poeta che mi guidi,
Guarda la mia virtù, s'ella è possente,
Prima che all' alto passo tu mi fidi.
(DANTE).

(I gan to speak: "O Bard, who art my guide,
Regard my manhood, if it be enough,
Ere me to the deep pass thou dost confide.")

THE GRIEF OF RAVAN.

(From Michael M. S. Dutt).

SO at the Lord of Lanka's hest the messenger began—
But ere the word was on his lips, his lips grew pale and wan.

Then for a while, like one amazed, his eye around he cast;
And o'er his cheek, as he would speak, a sudden colour past.

The colour past from cheek to eye; he knew not how he spake:
"Sir King, Virbahu's gone to sleep, O never more to wake!"

To whom said Ravan sore at heart, his face with sorrow white:
"This tale of thine is like unto a vision seen at night.

"My son, whose might kept Gods in dread, hath beggar Rama slain?
Hath Fate, then, fell'd the stubborn oak with but a flower-chain?

"Alas, my darling! thou art gone so early!—woe is me!
Thro' what great sin of mine have I made thee mine arms to flee?

"O Fate Almighty, dost thou will to see me thus undone ?
Give me mine own ; where hast thou kept my loved and loving son ?

"My race, O cruel Fate, is fast decaying day by day !
Or why did Kumbhakarna, too, so early pass away ?

"As stout wood-cutters in a wood first cut off one by one
The boughs, and last against the tree their mighty axes run,

'So will my foemen in their wrath first lop off all my kin,
And, lastly, felling down myself, my golden island win.

'O Surpanakha ! in what hour did first thine eye behold
Yon cruel crawling human snake in Dandak's woods of old ?

"Me wretched ! in what hour again, to set my house on fire,
Brought I yon fairy fiery nymph from Panchavati dire ?

"O who shall keep the honour now of this far-honour'd line ?
My hopes are gone ; ere long, I see, a downfall will be mine.

"I wish I were within a wood, from man and sin apart,
Where, lone and tranquil, I could soothe the burning of my heart.

'My life is barren as a waste—no joy therein can grow ;
For, he for whom I die is dead ; I wish I could be so."

So saying, Ravan once again : "Good envoy, briefly tell
How sweet Virbahu bore himself, how he in battle fell."

Then spake the messenger in grief: "The task is all too hard,
For, how can I unfold his feats, who am no cunning bard?

"The Demon-host did ne'er before see such a leader brave;
Tho' mild at home, yet in the field he bore a figure grave.

"His battle-cry did shake, my lord, the heart of ev'ry foe;
His bow he bent, his shafts he sent, and laid whole legions low.

"His arrows flash'd and flash'd; their blaze, reflected in the sky,
Did make a sunbow when the cloud of dust had risen high.

"Upon his shoulders clang'd his shield, his brand was in his hand,
No fear had he of Rama's arms, nor of his Monkey-band.

"His skill he show'd in bending bow, in wielding sword and shield,
Death-blows he dealt on ev'ry side, and dyed the battle-field."

The messenger stopt short in grief, for he could speak no more;
The Lord of Lanka wail'd and wept, deep-wounded in the core.

Then to his courtiers Ravan said: "Come, from the house-top high
Look we upon Virbahu's death and soothe our eager eye."

The King did mount his palace-top, his courtiers all behind;
He let his veering glance alight on whatso he could find.

On all sides round the island shone with golden-crested towers
Inlaid like brooches in the heart of groves besprent with flowers.

And here upon the grassy green, above a silver fount,
Thin thread on thread of stealing mist did many a palm surmount.

And here a lovely pleasure-lake, and here a splendid shrine,
And here a gaily-gilded shop in fine array did shine.

For, all the wealth of all the world, exhaustless and untold,
Was hoarded up, O Lanka fair, at thy bright feet of gold.

He saw the rampart, long and strong, of Lanka's mother-town,
And on the rampart stairs the guards all hurrying up and down.

The Lion-portals all were closed; and here within the doors
He saw, full ready and awake, a countless Demon-force.

And there without the town he saw a locust horde of men,
That hung and hover'd line on line as far as he could ken.

Then to another scene he turn'd, his courtiers at his back;
It was the field of battle, and he felt his bosom crack.

In grief he cried: "O fallen friends, on you the jackals feed!
They grin and grapple o'er your hearts and make your bodies bleed!

"The vultures pounce upon your flesh—I cannot bear it more!
The war-dogs and the war-hawks, too, will they thus suck your gore?"

There, in the midst of friends laid low, he found Virbahu dead;
He lookt but once, then shut his eyes, and, broken-hearted, said:

"The bed whereon, my darling son, Virbahu, thou hast lain,
Is glorious; for, in fighting for thy country thou wast slain.

"Thy bed is glorious: yet my heart doth not for glory care:
What booteth glory unto me, if thou art lost for e'er?

"This world, O Fate, is but the field of all thy sports below;
Why art thou pleased with having seen a mortal suffer woe?"

So saying, Ravan in his woe his eyes to seaward cast,
Beheld the bridge by Rama built, and slowly spake at last:

"O Sea! how fine a necklace thou on thy fine neck dost wear!—
Yet fie! no necklace, 'tis a chain!—so rude dost thou appear?

"So rude to such a golden isle, that decks thy sable breast
Like myriad-lightning'd Koustubh-gem upon young Madhav's chest?

"Throw off that chain! Throw off that chain! why with the bridge thus bound?
This isle is waste; in waters vast let all our foes be drown'd."

Then from the golden palace-top he came down with his men,
And 'mid the courtiers in the court did mount his throne again.

Pale as, nay paler than, a cloud, Chitrangada came there;
A creeping plant bereft of bloom, half-wither'd and half-bare.

She wore no trinkets in her grief; a simple dress she wore;
She lookt to Ravan, beat her breast, her golden ringlets tore.

For, stung at heart as with a dart, she could not ope her tongue
Like stork what time a snake, her nest approaching, eats her young.

The Lord of Lanka saw her face, he saw her face and wept,
The courtiers wept, the gateman too, of one so dear bereft.

And for a while a silence reign'd, an evil silence, there;
No nose did breathe, no lips did move, so sad the mourners were.

Then spake the Queen: "A gem serene kind Fate bestow'd on me;
With thee I kept it: where is it? I ask it back of thee.

"Thou art a king, thy duty is the poor man's all to save;
And I am poor; return me now the gem to thee I gave."

"And thou," said Ravan, "thou, my dear, wilt also vex me so?
O add not fuel to the fire, thy heart is full of woe.

"This Lanka, nurse of heroes once, hath now no warrior great;
My realm is left all hero-reft at thy son's woful fate.

"At one child's death, my dearest Queen, thou art so pale with grief;
While at a thousand children's death my mind hath no relief.

"This Lanka will decay, I see in fancy's eye, my Queen;
My men fall day by day before the foeman's arrow keen.

"Then weep not, fair Chitrangada, for neither tears nor sighs
Can change the fixt decree of Fate or bid the dead arise."

June, 1897.

[NOTE.—Michael Dutt's conception of Fate throughout his great epic of "The Slaughter of Meghanad," from which this extract is taken, is more Greek than Indian. With regard to the metre of the version, it was quite unconsciously that I used that of Chapman's "Homer."]

THE GRIEF OF KOUSALYA.

(From Valmiki.)

THEN Queen Kousayla, tho' she was herself afflicted sore,
Upraised the senseless King who lay heart-broken on the floor.

She rubb'd and fann'd him for a while; his sense he did regain,
And harsher words fell from her tongue to storm his ear again.

"In ev'ry land above all men thy name, O King, is praised;
But, as my child thou hast exiled, thy shame will soon be raised.

"For, who is there with heart so hard that he can send his child,
To whom he pledged his crown and staff, unto the forest wild?

"Hast thou exiled thy guiltless child for fear of lies alone?
Mark well, thou art a liar still, not giving him the throne.

"This Solar line for love of truth is known in ev'ry clime;
By this thy deed thou hast profaned that far-famed race sublime.

"This golden rime in olden time himself did Brahma sing,
When he did weigh the worth of Truth, well-known on earth, O King:

"'A thousand sacrifices set against one Truth I've weigh'd,
And found, O men, in weight and worth by far the latter sway'd.'

"So, sacrificing their own lives, one Truth the wise uphold;
A greater thing than Truth, my lord, these three worlds do not hold.

"By Truth alone the Sun gives heat, the Moon grows phase by phase,
By Truth alone was Nectar churn'd, on Truth is Nature's base.

"Nay, Virtue with its fourfold form to Truth doth always cling,
Just as a meek four-footed ox doth to the post, O King.

"The wise, my lord, speak of two paths to Virtue—Grace and Truth,
Whereon, I say, all Virtue here is based in very sooth.

"Thy fame is marr'd, thy name is lost, for having left my child;
Thou settest down for him thy crown, but him thou hast exiled.

"The odour of a blossom spreads towards the draft of air;
But the sweet scent of a man's fame is wafted ev'rywhere.

"The fragrance of the sandal-wood is not so lasting here
As that of fame; so pious men to virtue oft adhere.

"But the bad smell of this bad deed, destroying all thy fame,
Will ever run from place to place and render foul thy name.

" Good luck ! thy dear one did not ask my stripling to
be slain ;
Ay, such a boon from such a king she doubtless could
obtain !

" As in a lonesome wilderness the stouter brutes attack
The helpless deer, so stronger men oppress the weak,
alack !

" Yet why for nothing censure thee in many a cruel
word ?
My luck is bad ; what shall I gain by blaming thee, my
lord ?

" My boy forbade me for his sake his father to chastise ;
O wrongly have I censured thee, forgetting his advice !

" What other lady ever spake such bitter words and fell
To her own lord, as I ? Ah then, I have not acted well.

" I blame thee not, for this our world is led by One
Most High ;
My luck is bad, o'er which I have no power ; why blame
thee ? why ?

" By fate ordain'd, my soothfast son all earthly joys
hath left
To keep thy truth, and left his home, of ev'ry pleasure
reft."

Thus weeping hot, the Queen could not her sorrow's
end attain ;
She, robb'd of wit, as in a fit, began to speak again :

" Much more than Rama I lament, I do lament this day
That brother-loving Lakshman, who hath traced his
brother's way.

"I think of Lakshman, who forsook his wife and mother good
To work his brother weal, and went unbidden to the wood.

"I think of Sita, Sita good, King Janak's daughter fair;
How will she rove the lonesome grove, and rugged tree-bark wear?

"How will she sleep upon the steep, with hay and leaves bestrown?
How will she dwell within a cell, and bide her hours alone?

"O when shall I behold again that sweet face of my child?
Ah never, never! long will he stay in the forest wild.

"My heart is surely made of stone, or why doth it not crack?
My loved and loving son is gone, and I am lost, alack!

"Thou hast, my lord, forsaken all—thyself, thy fame, thy son,
Thy kingdom, and thy virtues all—O we are all undone!"

July, 1897.

[NOTE.—Those who are interested in the Story of Rama should read Griffiths' pretty free verse-translation of the epic.]

THE LAY OF THE LORD.

(From the so-called Vyasa).

Book I. The Sadness of Arjun.

Dhritarashtra.

On the sacred plain of Kuru met together for the fray
Mine own men and all the Pandavs: tell me, Sanjay, what did they ?

Sanjay.

When Duryodhan saw the forces of the Pandavs well-array'd,
Near he came unto his tutor, and a royal speech he made

(Duryodhan).

" See, O tutor, see the army of the sons of Pandu there,
Duly drawn up by thy pupil, Drupad's son, of wisdom rare.

" Yon are bowmen equal unto Bhim and Arjun still in war:
Yuyudhan, Virat, and Drupad sitting on his mighty car,

" Chekitan, and Dhrishtaketu, and the king of Kasi town,
Purujit, and Kuntibhoj, and Seivya, warrior of renown,

" Yudhamanyu, Uttamoujas, and the son of Bhadra fair,
And the sons of Drupad's daughter sitting all on chariots there.

" Hearken now, O best of Brahmans, who amongst us are of fame,
Leaders of my mighty army; these, that thou mayst know, I name:

"Thou, and Bhishma too, and Karna, Kripa also, good in wars,
Asvatthaman, and Vikarna, Soumadatti winning cars,

"And a host of other warriors, each agog to quit his life
For my sake, each many-weapon'd and experienced in the strife.

"This array of ours, in order kept by Bhishma, scant I deem;
That array of theirs, in order kept by Bhim, full great doth seem.

"Wherefore, placed in fixt divisions, each of you, my warlike men,
Thro' the movements of battle, look to Bhishma now and then."

Then the aged Kuru grandsire, pouring joy into his core,
Blew his conch, in doughty fashion roaring out a lion's roar.

Conch and kettledrum and cymbal, battledrum and bugle strong
All at once did clang together, and that sound was loud and long.

Till from out a mighty chariot, which white horses lightly drew,
Madhav and the son of Pandu on their conchs celestial blew.

Krishna blew on Five-Folks'-Trophy; Arjun blew on God-endow'd;
And the wolfish-bellied hero blew a blast on Poundra loud;

King Yudhishthir, son of Kunti, blew on Endless-Victor's-Dower;
Nakul blew on Pleasant-Bellow; Sahadev, on Jewel-Flower.

Thereon Kasya, prince of archers, and Sikhandin on his car,
Dhrishtadyumna, and Virat, and Satyaki unfoil'd in war,

Drupad, and the Droupadeyas, blew their conchs, O Lord of Earth,
With the long-arm'd son of Bhadra, one by one, in martial mirth.

And that mighty din the bosoms of the Dhartarashtras tore,
Making sky and earth together echo back the mighty roar.

Then the ape-sign'd Pandav saw the Dhartarashtras in array,
And, amidst the flight of weapons, to the Senses' Lord did say:

(*Arjun*).

"Place my car, O thou Unshaken, right between the armies bright,
Whilst I see them set in order and full ready for the fight.

"With whom shall I fight in battle? I desire to look on those
Who, to work Duryodhan pleasure, are assembled here as foes."

So the Lord of all the Senses, by the Lord of Sleep addrest,
Placed that best of cars, O Bhârat, right between the armies' best.

Right in face of Bhishma, Drona, and of all the Lords of land;—
Then he said, "O son of Pritha, see the Kurus in a band."

There the mighty son of Pritha fathers and grandfathers saw,
Tutors, uncles, brothers, children, grandsons, kinsmen, sires-in-law,

Comrades too in either army;—then beholding kin and kind,
Said the son of Kunti, deeply moved by passion, sad in mind:

(*Arjun*).

"Seeing all these kinsmen, Krishna here prepared to fight or die,
Lo! my limbs are waxing languid, and my mouth is waxing dry;

"Lo! a quake is on my body, and my hair on bristles turns,
Gandiv from my hand is slipping and my skin with fever burns;

"Nay, I cannot stand erect, for all my mind is whirling round,
And a crowd of froward omens, O thou Hairy One, is found.

"Nor do I see good in slaying all these kinsmen in the fight;
Krishna, I desire not vict'ry, nor a kingdom, nor delight.

"What shall we do with a kingdom, O Cow-owner, what shall we?
Of what good will be enjoyment? Of what good our living be?

"They for whom we seek a kingdom and enjoyment and delight,
They, resigning lives and riches, are assembled here to fight.

"Tutors, fathers, sons, grandfathers, uncles too, and sires-in-law,
Children's children, spouses' brothers, and the kinsmen whom I saw,

"These I will not slay, O Slayer of Madhu, tho' myself be slain,—
Even if the three worlds' sceptre—what of earth?—I chance to gain.

"If we slay the Dhartarashtras, what contentment may we win,
Folk-tormenter? Sin will seize us, if we slay these slaves of sin.

"So, to kill the Dhartarashtras, our own kinsfolk, is not right;—
How by killing these our kinsfolk may we, Madhav, gain delight?

"Even if they, with their reason blinded by rapacious ends,
Find no ill in race-destruction or oppression of their friends,

"Should we not, O Folk-tormenter, try to shun this sinful act,
We who look on race-destruction as a mighty sin in fact?

"With the loss of race each racial rite eternal surely dies;
With the loss of virtue surely all the race is seized by vice;

"With the rise of vice, O Krishna, all the women of the race
Get corrupt, and, when they are so, racial mixture is the case;

"And to hell the race-destroyers and the race doth mixture call,
For, their sires without oblation and without libation fall.

"By these mixture-breeding vices of the race-destroying host
All the castely and the racial rites eternal must be lost.

"We have heard from Sacred Scripture that for evermore in hell
They that bring about destruction of their race must have to dwell.

"Woe is us! who are determined to commit a mighty sin,
As, for pleasures of a kingdom, we are forth to slay our kin.

"Better far it would be, if the Dhartarashtras, arms in hand,
In the battle slay me, armless and unable to withstand."

Thus, at heart with sorrow smitten, speaking in the
midst of war,
Arjun, dropping bow and arrows, took his seat upon the
car.

May, 1899.

[NOTE.—The whole philosophy of the Lay, which is called the "Indian Bible," is based on the question of the righteousness of this war. Righteous activity in and through the world, as opposed to worldless inactivity, forms the central teaching of the Lay. It has been translated again and again into most of the European languages, and in India it is read a thousand times more than the Vedas themselves, for which there is more national than religious veneration. The metre of the present version is that of Tennyson's "Locksley Hall."]

THE CLUB THAT SHATTERS ERROR.

(From Sankara).

AH fool! thy thirst of wealth forsake—
Thereto in mind no liking take;
The little wealth thy work acquires—
With that content thy heart's desires.

Money breeds ill,—remember this;
From money comes no jot of bliss;
Nor trust his son the rich man dare,—
This is the law known ev'rywhere.

Who is thy wife, and who thy child?
This world is full of wonders wild!
Whose art thou, man? whence comest thou?
Think, brother, of the matter now.

Boast not of wealth or friends or prime;
All in a wink is stol'n by Time;
Leaving this world's attractions vain,
Sweet Brahmahood soon do thou gain.

Our life is fickle, dim and brief
As water on a lotus-leaf;
For, Dragon Malady devours
This care-beladen world of ours.

Think always of this matter high,
The thought of brittle wealth put by;
With good men's concourse for thy boat
Thou thro' this sea-like world canst float.

The Eight Great Hills, the Seven Seas,
Brahm, Indra, Surya, Rudra—these
Nor thou nor I nor aught can be;—
Then wherefore grief is felt by thee?

As long thy money thou canst earn,
To thee thy family will turn;
Then, when with age thy frame is weak,
No one to thee a word will speak.

From lust, rage, thirst and error free,
"What thing am I?" the wise will see;
The dullard, of self-knowledge reft,
To rot for e'er in hell is left.

Let fanes and tree-roots give thee rest,
The ground a bed, deer-skins a vest;
For, is there any, that doth find,
With passion gone, no bliss of mind?

The boy is only fond of play,
And with a maid the youth is gay,
The old man is immersed in care,
But no one clings to Brahma e'er.

A foe or friend, a son or mate,
Treat thou with neither love nor hate;
Be equal-minded ev'rywhere,
If thou for Vishṇuhood dost care.

As thou wast born, so shalt thou die,
And in a mother's womb shalt lie;
This evil of the world is plain;—
What bliss, then, wilt thou hope to gain?

Lo, day and night, and eve and morn,
And spring and winter, all return;
Time flies, the term of life is done—
Yet airy hope is left by none.

Thy frame is faded, gray thy head,
Thy gum hath all its teeth now shed,
Thy hand-held stick doth tremble fair,—
Yet brittle hope thou leavest ne'er.

In thee, in me, elsewhere is He;
In vain thou waxest wroth with me;
Man! in thyself all selves behold,
And sense of difference withhold.

These sixteen quatrains sweetly thought
To pupils often should be taught;
What further can I do for those
Whose brains with this will not unclose?

May, 1899.

[NOTE.—Those who are interested in the Vedanta philosophy of Sankara, who is a sort of an Eastern Fichte, maintaing the reality of the Absolute Ego and the unreality of the external world, should read Thibaut's translation of the Vedanta Sutra and Bhashya. They should also ask themselves: "What has this worldless asceticism to do with our work-day world?"]

THE LAY OF THE LORD.

(From the so-called Vyasa).

BOOK II.—DEVOTION THROUGH THE SANKHYA.

UNTO him—thus moved by passion, with his courage waxing weak,
With his eyes bedew'd and swollen—did the Slayer of Madhu speak.

(Krishna).

"Whence hath come on thee this sadness, Arjun, at the time of need?—
Quite ignoble, uncelestial, it will not to glory lead.

"Yield not unto weakness, Arjun; this is unbecoming now;
Casting off thy bosom's faintness, rise, O slayer of foemen thou."

(Arjun).

"How shall I, O Slayer of Madhu, with my shafts assail to-day
Bhishma and my tutor Drona—worthy of my honour they?

"Rather live on alms, than *murder* these superiors noble-soul'd;
I should feed on blood-stain'd viands, if I slew them seeking gold!

"For, we wot not which is better: loss or vict'ry in the strife?
Lo! the Dhartarashtras beard us, in whose death we seek not life!

"Struck at heart with guilt and passion, with confounded mind, I pray,
Say what's better—I, thy pupil, come to thee for refuge, say!

"For I see not how this sorrow, drying my senses, can be driven,
Tho' be mine a sway unstinted over earth or over heaven."

So the doughty Lord of Slumber to the Lord of Senses spake;
"Fight I will not," to the Cowherd spake he, and no sound did make.

Unto him whose heart was sinking, unto him in words of jest
Spake the Senses' Lord, O Bhârat, right between the armies' best.

(*Krishna*).

"Thou hast grieved for whom thou shouldst not; words of wisdom yet hast said;—
Now the wise would never grieve for or the living or the dead.

"Nor is it that I have not been, no, nor thou, nor all these kings;
Nor is it that we shall not be, after all these worldly things.

"As the 'bodied soul in body suffers childhood, youth and age,
So it gets another body;—this will not afflict the sage.

"Contacts with the earthly, causing cold and heat, delight and pain,
Come and go, for they are fleeting; child of Bharat, bear them sane.

"For the man whom these afflict not, who is firm in weal and woe—
Best of men! the man is destined unto deathlessness to go.

"What *is not* can ne'er be; Arjun; that which *is* can ne'er not-be;
Of these two they see the limit, who the truth of things can see.

"Know that That Which spread out All This, is indeed unperishing;
None can ever cause to perish That Which is a waneless thing.

"These are call'd the dying bodies of the 'bodied soul of men,
Which is changeless, deathless, boundless; child of Bharat, fight thou then.

"He who deems the soul a killer, he who deems it kill'd again,
Neither of them seeth rightly, for it slays not, nor is slain.

"And 'tis never born, it dies not; was not born, nor will be so;
Birthless, changeless, prime, eternal, deathless, tho' the frame may go.

"How can he who knows it to be deathless, birthless, free from wane—
How can he, O son of Pritha, slay one, cause one to be slain?

" As a man leaves ragged garments and resorts to newer clothes,
So the soul leaves worn-out bodies and to newer bodies goes.

" It cannot be cleaved by weapons, it cannot be burnt by fire,
It cannot be spoilt by water, it cannot be dried by air;

" It cannot be cleaved or burnt out, it cannot be spoilt or dried,
Present ev'rywhere, eternal, firm, unmoving, sure to bide;

" It cannot be felt or thought of, it cannot be changed, 'tis shown;—
Wherefore, knowing thus its nature, it behoves thee not to groan.

" And if thou dost think it to be ever born or ever dying,
Even then it is not proper, mighty-arm'd, to be thus sighing.

" For, the born shall die for certain, and the dead again be born;
Wherefore, it is not becoming over reachless things to mourn.

" Both the primal and the final states of beings are unseen;
Only seen the middle state is;—there is nought to mourn, I ween.

" Some men look on this as wondrous; this as wondrous some proclaim;
Others hear of this as wondrous; hearing, few can know the same.

" Since in each one's body never can the 'bodied soul be slain,
Child of Bharat, 'tis not proper over all to mourn in vain.

" 'Tis not meet for thee to falter, looking to thy duty right;
To a Kshatra there is nothing better than a righteous fight.

" Happy are the Kshatras, Partha, unto whom is freely given
Such a righteous fight and holy as an open door to heaven.

" Such a righteous fight and holy if thou wilt not seek to win,
Then, thro' fame and duty quitted, thou wilt be attack'd by sin.

" Then mankind thy shame undying will for evermore proclaim;
To a man that was in honour worse by far than death is shame.

" And these car-borne chiefs will fancy thou hast fled the field thro' fear;
Thou who wast so highly thought of wilt be deem'd a coward mere.

" And thy foes will speak such language as should not be spoke of thee,
Laying blame upon thy prowess; tell me, what can sadder be?

" Being slain, thou gainest heaven; winning, hast the earth in sway;
Therefore rise, O son of Kunti, firmly bent upon the fray.

" Deeming equal pain and pleasure, death and conquest, loss and gain,
Gird thyself up for the battle; thus no sin thou wilt sustain.

" Now this view is from the Sankhya; hear the Yoga teaching now;
Thou wilt leave the bonds of action, when on this is set thy vow.

" Here can be no waste of effort, here no detriment can be,
Just a little of this tenet from great terror makes one free!

' One this view, O son of Kuru, which is always constant found;
But the views of men inconstant, many-branch'd and with no bound.

" Flowery speech is often spoken, Partha, by the fools unfair,
Ready to discuss the Vedas, saying ' Nothing else is there,'

" Lusty-soul'd, and seeking heaven for the gain of bliss or might,
Ample fruit of this world's action, which is great thro' varied rite.

" These men's view, who are in quest of bliss and might, whose minds are fed
With that speech—is never constant, when to meditation wed.

" Of the *Three Modes* treat the Vedas; Arjun, get rid of the three;
Get rid of the *Pairs Opposing*, and in *Goodness* ever be;

" Get rid of the vain desire of owning what thou ownest not
And of keeping what thou ownest; last, possess thee in thy lot."

August—September, 1899.

[NOTE.—Observe the fine exposition of the theory of metempsychosis, which we first get in the West in Pythagoras. *Goodness*—Compare Aristotle's τὸ μέσον. Those who wish to have some idea of the rest of this philosophic poem should consult Barnett's "Brahma-Knowledge" and Davies's prose translation of the Lay.]

IN THE GLOOM.

(From Mrs. Roy).

CREATURES we are of gloom !
In gloom awhile we play,
In gloom doth melt away
The mart of life and bloom.

Whence come, and whither bound ?—
This mighty mystery
Of how and why we be
How few, how few have found !

There, thro' the gloomy wood,
A dim dark ray is seen ;
Who knows whence it hath been ?
Its beauty who hath view'd ?

As long as life may stay,
Since certain is the doom
That we must move thro' gloom,
O seek and chase the ray.

O onward let us hie
In quest of yonder ray ;
What, if we fail ? away !
In yonder light we'll die.

Amid this solemn gloom,
Seek we and follow we
The little light we see ;
Therein we'll play, O come.

September, 1899.

NOTE :—The very first poem in Mrs. Roy's "Light and Shade" is "In the Gloom" ; but the very next one shows her "In the Light." This duality of mood is peculiar to her temperament.]

IN THE LIGHT.

(From Mrs. Roy).

CHILDREN we are of light:
O what a concourse bright!
In light we sleep and wake,
And life's carousal take.

Life's endless candles see
Beneath one canopy,
Beneath one Day-god's ray,
Fade, fade and fade away.

Amid this splendid light
No more we lose our sight,
No more we wander blind
Where we the path can find.

September, 1899.

[NOTE:—Mrs. Roy's "L'Allegro" comes after her "Il Pensieroso."]

THE FAIR MARTYRS.

(From a Bengali Song).

BLAZE, blaze thy last and brightest,
Thou fiendly-friendly pyre:
The chaste will cast their bodies
Upon thy mouth of fire.
Blaze, blaze, and in a moment
Our burnings will be o'er;
O Chitor, crown of Princeland,
Farewell for evermore.

List, list, ye sons of Islam,
The ever-blazing pain
Ye raise within our bosoms
Will never go in vain.
Ye Moslems iron-hearted,
Ye may not hear our cry;
That Judge Whose ear is open
Will listen from on high.

Look, look how all the women,
To shun undying shame,
Resign their dying bodies
Unto the jaws of flame.
Come, sisters, come, O maidens,
Take leave here the earth,
Be true unto the nation
To which we owe our birtn.

Let us, ere all our feelings
Are thaw'd away by death,
Let us, ere we are ashes,
Breathe out one last long breath;

For, ne'er shall bard of Chitor
In after ages say
We chose the gloss of pleasure
And flung the gem away.

Blaze, blaze thy last and brightest,
Thou fiendly-friendly pyre:
The chaste will cast their bodies
Upon thy mouth of fire.
Look, look, ye heartless Moslems,
Look how we shun disgrace—
We will be burnt to ashes,
Yet never stain our race.

Come, sisters, come, O maidens,
Why do we make delay?
O wear the crown of glory
By throwing life away.
Look, look with eyes wide open,
Thou earth, thou moon, thou sky;
Write, write in starry letters,
Ye gods that dwell on high.

October, 1899.

[NOTE:—This refers to one of the saddest chapters of Indian history, when Hindus and Muhammadans were constantly at war; consult Todd's "Rajasthan."]

THE SWORN HERO.

(*From Roby Tagore*).

'TIS for thee, O mother mine,
My limbs I throw away;
'Tis for thee, O mother mine,
My life adown I lay.
'Tis thy wrong, O mother mine,
My tears from eyes will wring;
'Tis thy song, O mother mine,
My lyre will ever sing.

Tho' this arm be weak and frail,
Yet it will do thy deed;
Tho' this sword with rust be stain'd,
Yet it will have thee freed.
Tho' this lyre contain no fire,
No power, welladay!—
What know I?—one son of thine
May wake to hear its lay!

October, 1899.

[NOTE:—There is a pathetic tone about this patriotism.]

THE DAWN-BRIDE.

(From Kristo Mazumdar).

TELL me, tell me, happy Dawn,
Who hath made thee fine,
Left that round vermilion tinge
On that brow of thine ?
Gently, gently dost thou smile,
Steeping us in joy :
Who hath taught thee such a smile,
Such an aspect coy ?

Whom dost thou sing in the grove
To thine utmost power ?
Whom wilt thou, O fairy Dawn,
Give those gifts of flower ?
At Whom castest thou that gaze,
Opening wide thine eye ?
For Whom sheddest thou those tears,
Heaving deep thy sigh ?

Just now ev'ry life was still,
Half-dead half-alive :
Lo ! thy weird and welcome sight
Bids them all revive.
Show me, show me, happy Dawn,
That great King of Heaven
Who this grand enlivening power
Unto thee hath given.

November, 1899.

[NOTE :—The Dawn-Bride reminds one almost of the Vedic Dawn-Goddess.]

MARY STUART'S FAREWELL TO FRANCE.

(*From Beranger*).

FARE thee well, sweet land of France,
Which I should hold so high!
Cradle of my happy prime,
To leave thee is to die.

Me from thee, my chosen land,
The cruel Fates will sever;
Hearken Mary's farewell song,
Remember her for ever.

Blows the wind; we leave the strand;
In vain my sobs must be:
Heaven hath not swell'd the waves
To give me back to thee.

When the lilies first I wore
Before thy people's sight,
They admired my queenly rank
Less than my beauty bright.

Queenship 'midst the gloomy Scots
Awaits me all in vain:
I could only be a queen
O'er Frenchmen bright to reign.

Love, and glory, genius too,
Have dazzled all my prime:
Dark, too dark alas! will prove
In Scotland rude my time.

O that dream, that evil dream!
I saw—ah, did I see?—
Deep thro' slumber's mystic eyes
A scaffold built for me!

France ! to thee the Stuart queen
Will, from amidst her fears,
Turn her eyes as on this day,
The witness of her tears.

But lo, under other skies
The ship hath 'gun to sail,
And the night conceals thy shores
Within her misty veil.

Fare thee well, sweet land of France,
Which I should hold so high !
Cradle of my happy prime,
To leave thee is to die.

December, 1899.

[NOTE :—I know of nothing so sad, and therefore so sweet, as this picture of the great Queen of the Scots.]

ÆNEAS' PRAYER TO APOLLO.

(From Vergil).

PHŒBUS, thou that ruest Ilion's heavy woes of old,
By whose aid the weapons and the arms of Paris bold
On the charmed body of the great Achilles told,

Thou my guide, I enter'd oceans washing mighty lands,
Far-off realms and kingdoms, and the great Massylian bands
Far away in Libya, and the Syrtes' vasty sands:

Now at last we seize the ever-flying Western Shore,
Stand upon thy threshold, tired of wind and wave and oar,
Tired in mind and body, longing not to wander more.

Thus far and no further may the heavy luck of Troy
Follow us, O Phœbus; let us clutch the peaceful joy
Sliding off for ever like a ball before a boy.

For, enough of action and of motion we have had
In the deep mid-ocean foaming like a charger mad,
When the loss undreamt-of of our steersman made us sad.

Juno and Minerva, Neptune, and ye godheads rude,
Whom the mighty glory of the Dardan land withstood,
You, too, now behoveth to be more humane and good.

Thou, O holy maiden, who foreknowest what will be,
Give—I ask not kingdoms, which were never due to me—
Me, my soldiers, and my godheads weary of the sea,

To repose in Latium; then for Phœbus I will raise
Many a holy temple, with the dawn of better days,
Fair as any temple ever sung in olden lays.

For, we ask no longer for the swiftness of the wind,
Weary of its ravings, weary both in frame and mind;
Let us here, O Phœbus, live and ever lie reclined.

Let us here, O Phœbus, rest a little from the toil
We had in the ocean and in Ilion's land of broil;
Let us rest a little, settle slowly in the soil.

December, 1899.

[NOTE:—I am indebted to Tennyson's "Lotos-Eaters" for some turns of expression in this rendering.]

FROM GOPA TO THE BUDDHA.

(From Mrs. Roy).

IF indeed, O Goutam, I am in thy way
Nothing but a barrier,—bid me step away;
I will show no longer this unhallow'd face,
Ask of thee no longer love or any grace.
Chase alone thy projects, may thy hopes be crown'd,
Let me in a corner lie without a sound.
In thy glory, Goutam, all my pride shall be—
In thy lapse, my dearest, pain shall rise in me;
In thy sorrow, Goutam, sorrow must I feel—
In thy weal, my dearest, must I find my weal.

'Twas my joy to serve thee; since thy hests I got
All my heart was sated—nothing else I sought.
If that pleasure also I may have no more—
Which I prized and valued other things before—
If that pleasure also must from me depart,
Go thou as thou wishest, treading on my heart.

Restless is thy bosom, lustreless thine eye,
Oftentimes thou sayest "Let me quickly fly
To a lonesome forest, ere these shadows vain
O'er my feeble bosom lawless power gain:
In a mire my feet are, and the more I try
To emerge, the deeper sunk in mud am I!"
Am I, dearest Goutam, such a mire to thee,
Such a mighty barrier?—Go thou, leaving me.

Oh, when they in childhood knit us hand to hand,
Heart to heart they could not tie us by the band!

For the light of wisdom ran thy noble hope,
While in utter darkness I began to grope.
Past is golden childhood, rosy youth is gone,
Still each other's bosom we have not yet known!
'Twas an ill-yoked wedding—darkness yoked with light!
This is why, O Goutam, thou dost hate my sight.

What rich mine, I pray thee, hast thou chanced to see
That these vasty riches have no charm for thee?
What acute discerning have thine eyes attain'd
That this mighty palace is to be disdain'd?
What acute discerning, what rich mine, my dear,
Make thee slight all pleasure?—tell me with no fear.
At thy feet how often doth my restless heart
Long to learn the wisdom, by whose aid thou art
Richer than the richest, thro' the lack of which
Void is all my beauty, void my trinkets rich!
Vain that hope, no longer in this way unmeet
Like a thorn shall Gopa lie beside thy feet:
Like a mire no longer shall she clog thy way:
Let her, blind as she is, with her darkness stay.

Thou wouldst be the Buddha, from all error free,
And on earth a wiser should not, should not be:
Thou wouldst know the secret of the human life,
Thou wouldst con the riddle—how to win the strife.
Oft I hear thee whisper "Life is like the spark
Kindled by the striking of two flint-stones dark;
Life is like the music shaken by the strings
Of a lyre all feeble, fading as it rings;
There is some high wisdom, which once found will give
Rest and sweet extinction unto all that live."

Go thou, sweetest Goutam, go thou in the quest
Of that happy wisdom which will give thee rest:
By my weight why should I, I who cannot swim,
Clog and drown my divemate, kill both me and him?

March, 1900.

[NOTE:—Here we get an insight into the mind of the poetess. The names "Goutam" and "Gopa" are my own insertions. I have also inserted the five opening couplets of the last stanza, the main idea of which is taken from Max Müller's essay on the Buddha in his "Chips from a German Workshop."]

FROM JANA TO NILADHVAJA.

(*From Michael M. S. Dutt*).

HARK, the war-drums pealing at the royal gate!
Lo, the banners waving in majestic state!
Elephants in harness trumpet day and night,
Barded stallions whinny in their zeal for fight,
And the royal soldiers known for hardihood
Arm themselves all gorgeous in a warlike mood!
Wherefore all this bustle?—waging war, I ween,
For the death of Pravir, with the traitor mean?

This is what becomes thee, hero true thou art—
Go thou forth to battle with a fiery heart!
Shed no tear, my monarch, o'er thy darling's fate—
He is gone as mortals must be soon or late:
Go thou forth and straightway sheathe thy naked blade
In the heart of Arjun till the debt be paid;
Drench O drench thy sabre in the traitor's gore,
And this restless burning I shall feel no more!

But alas, mad Jana hopes what cannot be,
For the traitor sitteth yet in court by thee;
Yet within the palace rings the cithern's sound
Waked by light-clad women as they caper round.
What a shame! O heaven! whither shall I flee?
Who will, Niladhvaja, list and comfort me?
What is it they tell me?—thou hast made thine own
Him who slew thy darling!—set him on thy throne.

Ah, the gloomy fortune by whose shadow dense
All thy realm is clouded, also clouds thy sense.
Else, I pray thee, wherefore do they say, my lord,
Thou hast crown'd him monarch who was once abhorr'd?

How dost thou, my monarch, in a friendly way
Take the hand that paused not thine own child to slay
Is it like a father, like a warrior true,
Like the man that thou art, tell me, hero new ?
Where is now thy horn-bow ? where thy thirsty blade ?
Meanest thou to wield them till the debt be paid ?
What will people whisper when this tale of shame
Will be widely wafted to defile thy name ?

And I hear that Arjun is revered by thee
As the doughtiest warrior Earth did ever see.
Oh how false the honour ! let me show thee, king,
What he is—a coward and a craven thing:
At Panchala's tourney—judge, my monarch wise—
Many a king he cheated with the priest's disguise;
In the plains of Kuru, to his nature true,
By Sikhandin holpen, Bhishma old he slew,
Slew his master Drona, slew him by a trick;—
Yet the feet of Arjun thou art fain to lick !
These thou knowest fully, yet thou reckest not:
Oh the stain thy fawning on thy race hath brought !
Think O think upon it: shall I curse thee ? nay,
Thou art of my betters, nothing will I say.

Ah mine eyes, why shed ye bitter drops of tear ?—
Who was wont to wipe you is no longer here.
Ah my heart, why madly, madly burnest thou ?
Who will soothe thine ailing ? Where is Pravir now ?
Sore the doom I suffer by the will of Heaven,
And I take the fortune which my God hath given;
Lo, by thee forsaken, I am still at ease—
Heaven is my harbour, and His name my peace.

Grief hath made me aged—long I may not say—
Ere my leave is taken, this, my last, I say:

Serve no more that traitor, serve no more that lust,
Lend thy heart to virtue, build on her thy trust;
Burn O burn within thee for what thou hast done,
And thy bosom will be sheeny as the sun.

Now the end is coming, death is on thy wife,
And thou shalt no longer see her in this life.
If thou wailest wildly "Where is Jana dear?"—
Echo will but answer "Where is Jana dear?"

March, 1900.

[NOTE:—This is one of the most interesting side-stories of the Mahabharata. Here we meet with a typically high-minded woman of the epic age.]

FROM KEKAYI TO DASARATHA.

(From Michael M. S. Dutt.)

WHAT is it, O Raghav, from my maid I hear?
Yet, a low-born woman, she may lie, I fear.
Why are all the burghers drown'd in festive mirth,
Sterwing leaves and garlands on the dewy earth?
Why at ev'ry portal doth the gateman stand
Showering new-blown flowerets with a bounteous hand?
Why are pennons waving over ev'ry house?
Why do men and women revel and carouse?
Why do royal soldiers, foot and horse and all,
Loiter gaily-harness'd near the council-hall?
Why without the palace rings the cithern's sound
Waked by light-clad women as they caper round?
Say why Queen Kousalya with ungrudging hand
Doles out alms to paupers call'd from ev'ry land;
Say why Janak's daughter, fraught with glee to-day,
Clogs her beauteous body full of trinkets gay;
For what holy purpose, in the temples proud,
Prayerful priest and Brahman sound the conch so loud.
Tell me, why is all this pomp of ritual done?
Hath a foe been taken, or a kingdom won?
Fie to thee, my monarch!—nothing will I say—
Thou art of my betters; else, this very day,
With this tongue I would have told thee to thy face,
"Raghav is a liar, he hath shamed his race."

If one falsehood ever pass these lips of mine,
Come thou and behead me and my dues assign.
Just and true my censure—thou hast told a lie,
And thy deed will gather from all people "Fie!"
How wilt thou, O Raghav, show thy face again

To the city-people, to the council-men ?
People call thee pious, ever fond of truth :
Why, then, do I hearken—answer me in sooth—
Why, then, do I hearken, that thou wilt install
Queen Kousalya's darling as the Lord of all ?
Where is sweetest Bharat ? must I, must I bring
Once again those stories to thy mind, O King ?
Must I yet remind thee that in days of yore
It was I who heal'd thee of that arrow's sore ?
Didst thou not, I pray thee, pledge thy royal word
That I may be granted two requests, my lord ?
By one boon—and why not ?—let Kousalya's child
From this royal city be at once exiled ;
Ay, and by the other let my darling son
Rule the realm of Kosal, seated on thy throne.

Yet, alas, why am I throwing words away ?
Do thou as thou wishest, nothing will I say :
Whose the will can alter what is in thy mind ?
Who can stem a current or a lion bind ?
If I be not granted those two boons of mine,
I will dwell no longer in this town of thine :
Far and wide I'll wander, chanting ev'rywhere,
" Lo ! the Raghu King is cruel and unfair."
Unto all I'll whisper, men and women too,
" Lo ! the Raghu King is cruel and untrue."
And a pair of parrots I will tame, O King,
Speak to them thy hardness and each little thing :
They shall fly at pleasure, singing ev'rywhere,
" Lo ! the Raghu King is cruel and unfair."
Till the world will echo with a music rare,
" Lo ! the Raghu King is cruel and unfair."
On the tops of mountains I will write, my lord,
" Lo ! the Raghu King is faithless to his word."

I will teach the striplings of the street to sing,
" Lo ! the Raghu King is such a lying king."

If one grain of virtue lingers 'neath the sun,
Thou wilt have to suffer for what thou hast done.
Lo, my hopes are blasted, which thou gavest me ;
And a dire requital in due course shall be.
Live with her, I pray thee, live with her, I say,
Whom thou lovest truly : let me step away.
I will bid sweet Bharat with my father live,
Pleased with all the pleasure truth and virtue give :
He shall never enter this pernicious town,
Where the claims of virtue vice can trample down !

March, 1900.

[NOTE :—The whole of the Ramayana seems to me based on this part of the story. The characterisation of tactful Kekayi is a masterpiece.]

FROM SAKUNTALA TO DUSHYANTA.

(From Michael M. S. Dutt).

TAKE O take this leaflet, Lord of all the Earth,
From the silvan maiden, howso void of worth.
Her thou hast forgotten; yet can she forget
Thee on whom for ever all her soul is set?

Ah my madding bosom!—Hope hath hoodwink'd me;
For, as soon a dust-cloud in the sky I see,
Or as soon a murmur of the wind I list
Rounding all his love-glow to the pine half-whist,
Up I start in wonder, weening that a band
Now at last is coming to this forest-land!
Nay, sometimes I mutter like a fool aghast,
"Lo! my lord hath call'd me back to mind at last:
Is not there a dust-cloud fleering at the sky?
List ye not the hoof-beat slowly drawing nigh?"
With a cast of sadness and with soulful eyes
Wheel away my maidens as my pangs arise.

Need I vex thee further? Hour by hour I thirst
For yon happy pine-grove where I met thee first,
Hour by hour wend thither, view each new-blown flower,
And each light-leaved creeper gadding in the bower;
There I hear the whistle of the river-breeze,
And the cuckoo's warble, and the hum of bees;
There I catch the cooing of the woodland dove
Roosted on the tree-top close beside his love.
To the bee I murmur, "Mellow-humming bee,
Dost thou make thy moaning, say O say, for me?"
And I ask the cuckoo, "Wherefore dost thou pour,
Warbler of the woodland, all thy music-store?"

To the flowers I prattle, " Do ye softly smile,
Gems of all the woodland, at my lover's guile ? "
And I press the river, " With thy murmuring
Dost thou blame the falsehood of the faithless King ? "
To the leaf I whisper, " Garment of the trees,
Thou, when fresh, art fondled by the forest-breeze ;
But when once thy favour waxeth pale and sere,
Will the breeze, O prythee, dream of drawing near ?
Garment of the arbour, tell me verily,
If in that same fashion he hath quitted me."

With mine eyes half-open, 'neath the mango-grove
Oft I sit reclining lost in thoughts of love.
Should I list a footfall hard beside my seat—
Joy and shame and wonder make my bosom beat ;
When I look around me, nothing do I find
Save one vacant shadow and the silvan hind !
With a flaming bosom and with flowing eyes
To yon bower I hurry, where, thro' dread of spies
In the creepers hidden, unto thee I wrote
Yon delightful ditties and yon grateful note ;
Where, appearing sudden on a shady noon,
Thou didst soothe my burning, wake me from my swoon !

No one in this woodland knows my tale of woe,
Save two gentle maidens : whither shall I go ?
Unto whom, O Pourav, shall I pour my plaint ?
Who will in mine ailing help my spirit faint ?
When my maidens near me, tears bedim mine eye,
For they blame my lover, cry upon him fie :
Like a dart their censure thrills into my heart—
Answer them I cannot, while I feel the smart !

And, of other places, oft I seek yon tree,
'Neath whose hoary shadow thou didst marry me

In the old old fashion, golden-favour'd youth,
Calling Truth to witness, holder-up of Truth:
Guess O guess what feeling wakes in me anew
When yon bower I enter and yon tree I view!

Oft I lose my senses, dreaming of my lord,
Whom as yet I find not faithful to his word!
To his mind forgetful once again I bring
What he plainly promised when he gave the ring:
"Daily count a letter chased upon it, dear;
And, thy counting over, lo! my man is here."

Oft I lose my senses, battening on thy face,
Battening on thy simper all too sweet to trace:
Thee I find before me, thee I seek to clasp,
But my mind-made shadow soon eludes my grasp!
Who can say why torments chase me in this way?
Gloomy all my life is, gloomy with no ray.
Thou alone art able to relieve my woe,
Light away my twilight, bid my bosom glow.
Royal pomp I seek not: 'tis thy love alone
Which I lack, O Pourav, and for which I moan.

March, 1900.

[NOTE:—Here, as in the previous two epistles, Michael Dutt's model was Ovid's "Heroides." He was doubtless inspired by Kalidasa's "Sakuntala and her Keepsake," which is based on an episode of the Mahabharata. The artlessness of Sakuntala is highly telling; compare Miranda in Shakespeare's "Tempest."]

HOW THE SUNS WERE MADE.

(*From Jogen Bose*).

HO gods and angels, heirs of heaven,
Make ye the Spirit-region gay,
For God's own order hath been given—
"The Stars will all be made to-day."

By Him pervaded, pure, unborn,
With joy the Spirit-region rings;
Beam after beam in golden stream
From out its glowing bosom springs.

The Bloom of Love is blowing fair,
The Spring of Joyance spouts forth glee,
"Peace, Peace" is ringing ev'rywhere
In strains of choral symphony.

There thro' that region—space or land—
The Triune Being takes His seat
Upon an endless throne and grand,
With myriad systems at His feet.

Within His Being lie conceal'd
A myriad planet-pregnant Suns;
All Love is He, the Spring of Glee,
The Well of Life and Light at once.

Transcendent over Time and Space,
The Spaceless Timeless Spirit shone
Before the eye of seraphs high
And angels glorying in their dawn.

With bended heads and folded hands,
The gods and angels loudly sing
Hosannas sweet,—ethereal bands,
Whose chantings never cease to ring.

Amazed at what they never saw,
They send their voices all around
In ardent love and earnest awe,
While dews upon their cheeks are found:

"O blessed Spirit! Lord of All!
Without beginning, mean or end!
Almighty Maker, at Whose call
We rose, and on Whom we depend!

"No light was there, no radiance, none;
There was no darkness, no, nor shade;
There was no Space: in nothing's place
This radiant region Thou hast made.

"From naked nothing rose these gods,
These countless angels, at Thy voice;
And at Thy nod, Eternal God,
They smile, they praise Thee, and rejoice.

"To-day the Stars will all be made,
Almighty Maker, at Thy will;
And we shall see, all full of glee,
What-like the Stars are, praise Thee still.

"And we shall see how thro' all Space,
Amid a burst of light and heat,
The darting Suns will run apace
With planets rolling round them fleet.

"O blessed Spirit! Lord of All!
Without beginning, mean or end!
Almighty Maker, at Whose call
We rose, and on Whom we depend!"

Then, rising from His musings grave,
To build the orbs of quenchless flame,
With sheeny gods and angels brave,
The Power Eternal quickly came

To where, for endless ages, Night
Had cast her shadows black with dirt
And all the blacker to the sight
Of gods and angels glory-girt;

Where Nature, like a slattern young,
Made heard her peals of laughter clear,
Her peals of laughter loud and long
And almost rendering deaf the ear;

Where endless heaps of atoms lay
All roaring like a billowy sea,
For myriad leagues in ceaseless fray,
Without the slightest harmony.

That grim and grisly vision fills
The gods and angels full of awe;
"O save us all," they loudly call,
"For such a sight we never saw."

When on revolting Nature lit
The Potent Spirit of the Lord,
Her madness ceased, and from her fit
She rose, submissive to His word.

The roar of atoms ceased at once,
The laughter-peal became quite dead,
And Nature fair arising there
Before her Maker bow'd her head.

Upon obedient Nature's breast
The Blessed Being sat at length,
And mused a moment as He blest
His would-be world with life and strength.

Then, rising from His musings grave,
The Mighty Maker lookt about;
And in a trice—how grand! how nice!—
A thousand lightnings issued out.

A thousand, thousand lightnings bright
With thunders horrible to hear
Flow'd flashing; and that dazzling sight
Made gods and angels shake with fear.

Then in the twinkling of an eye
The heaps of atoms blazed with fire;
For myriad acres what did lie
But one long lucid ocean dire?

Enormous puffs of gaseous flame
Arose and flew to ev'ry side;
Tremendous peals of thunder came
With echo ringing far and wide.

With half-shut eyes and throbbing hearts,
The gods and angels shake with fear;
"O save us all," they loudly call,
"For such a sound we ne'er did hear.

"O save us all, Eternal Lord;
Thine endless prowess who can bear?
Those tongues of fire so dread, so dire
May blast the Spirit-region fair.

" Lo, there with flashes long and bright
Enormous streams of lightning fly;
Lo, there with mighty waves of light
The fiery ocean surges high.

" O stay the thunders, stay the flames,
Our ears are stunn'd, our eyes are dazed;
Those billows all our hearts appal,
O stay the billows Thou hast raised.

" O blessed Spirit! Lord of All!
Without beginning, mean or end!
Almighty Maker, at Whose call
The jarring atoms sweetly blend!"

Whereat the Maker fill'd their hearts
With but a portion of His might;
And once anew they turn to view
The glory of that heavenly sight.

They see in wonder blent with fear,
How by a new mysterious force
Each surge of light becomes a sphere
And round the ocean runs its course.

They see again how from a Sun,
Amid the burst of light and heat,
Eight planets dart and, home-drawn, run
Their circling course in orbits meet.

They see how with his lackeys four
The Belted Planet flies thro' Space,
How Saturn bright with rings of light
And eight attendants runs his race.

They cast their glances on the Earth
And on her little satellite;
They see that ball so dim, so small
Around its mother steer its flight.

They view the stellar systems all;
They see how all the planets smile
With streams of light serene and bright,
They see, and praise Him all the while:

"O blessed Spirit! Lord of All!
Without beginning, mean or end!
Almighty Maker, at Whose call
We rose, and on Whom we depend!

"Lo, on the deep-blue sea of Space
The fresh-lit stellar region swings;
Beam after beam in golden stream
From out its glowing orblets springs.

"From naked nothing atoms rose,
And worlds from atoms, at Thy voice;
And at Thy nod, Eternal God,
We smile, we praise Thee, and rejoice."

March, 1900.

[NOTE:—The cosmogonic conception here is half-eastern half-western.]

THE BROKEN SOUL.

(*From Mrs. Roy*).

MY chefish'd lyre is broken,
My wreath is snapt in twain,
The flower I thought so fresh is sere,
And ev'ry good I look for here
I look for but in vain.

Is it not rather early
My lamp of hope is out,
My dream of bliss is shatter'd quite,
And I am left to pass my night
In utter gloom and doubt ?

All weary, worn and wasted,
My heart is never whole !
How long, alas, must I confine
Within this broken heart of mine
This petty broken soul ?

To me so broke and batter'd
The same are life and death—
The same same thing ! how long must I
For bliss and veering fortune sigh,
And draw the long long breath ?

If one could know before this
How hollow was the world ;
If one could know the ways of life,
The gloom, the misery, and the strife
To which all men are hurl'd ;

Who would not leave, who would not,
This dreary world alone?
And turn a deaf ear to the call
Of selfish pleasures, one and all,
That leave us but to moan?

Who would have ever cherish'd
Such flimsy earthly rest?
Oh, that the desert's looming face
Could have allured me to embrace,
Vain world, thy cheating breast!

My star is set for ever,
My light is sunk in gloom;
Mine eyes but open to behold
Dim darkness, gather'd fold on fold,
That gapes like dug-up tomb.

Is this the fruit, the issue,
Of that upsoaring heart?
Ah, wherefore did I nurse that hope,
Which like a wind-blown cobweb-rope
Was split and flung apart?

Now while my heart is burning,
I'll take my broken lyre
And sing: "To suffer pain and woe
Man was created—sent below;
O jump upon the pyre!"

Yet—may not one be happy?
Is human life all woe?
And is it but to burn and burn,
And on the same hot pyre to turn,
That man was sent below?

Sing, broken lyre, sing loudly:
"Nay,—nay,—nay,
There is for man a prospect high,
An object higher; 'twas not to sigh
That man was made from clay.

"Yon is the scene of action,
Yon is the battle-field:
Go forth, go forth, a hero true,
Well-girt with virtue's armour new
And faith's time-honour'd shield.

"Go give up, noble soldier,
Thine own for others' ease;
Die for thy brother; set thy mind
On aiding need, and thou shalt find
A newer truer peace.

"O sweet to die for others!
Why groan and grumble so?
Behold, the thicker is thy sigh,
The sorrowfuller is thy cry,
The greater is thy woe.

"The dream of bliss is shatter'd—
O let it shatter'd be;
The lantern's gone—O let it go;
Quit, quit the marsh; why wander so
For that which flies from thee?

"Pain! pain! what pain is on thee?
Thy tears are shed in vain;
If there be any in thy heart,
Beneath which thou dost inly smart,
Why raise so loud a strain?

"Then hide thy grief within thee;
And let it shed from thence
A faint faint light, like Hesper white,
Hid in the new moon's central night,
Shining thro' darkness dense.

"Pain! pain! what pain is on thee?
Think thou not of thy pain;
But dry the salt of dewy eyes,
And let thy words so thick with sighs
Be plain and smooth again.

"Sweet thought, that ev'ry man is
For ev'ry other man;
Get up, thou valiant hero true,
And with God-given courage new
Live for thy brotherman."

September, 1900.

[NOTE:—This is a glorious struggle out of pessimism into optimism.]

THE DAYS FLY.

(*From Mrs. Roy*).

ONE by one, one by one,
Days come and fly;
The billows come, the billows roll,
They roll and die;
A thousand cravings bubble up
Within the heart of men,
And all upon a sudden burst
Within the heart again;
And the days fly.

One by one, one by one,
The founts run dry,
And all our nearest dearest friends
Are call'd to die;
With slackening sinking sorrowing heart,
All batter'd in the strife,
Again we on our shoulders take
The weary load of life;
And the days fly.

Bit by bit, bit by bit,
The heart-heaved sigh
And the salt crystal on the cheek
Subside and die;
Remembrance only stays awake,
And tells the sad old tale,
Re-gathering all the shatter'd past,
Until her memories fail;
And the days fly.

September, 1900.

[NOTE:—Does it not remind you of Moore's "Light of Other Days"?]

A SONG OF IND.

(*From Roby Tagore*).

O CHARMER of the whole world's mind.
O land of brightest sunshine, Ind,
My parents' parent thou!
Thy feet are wash'd by azure seas,
Thy green hem trembles in the breeze,
Thy sky-kist front the Snow-mount is,
White frost doth crown thy brow.
The earliest dawn was on thy dome,
Psalms earliest from thy woods did come,
Spread earliest in thy silvan home
Knowledge and Truth enow.
O blest, thou ever-hallow'd land,
That feedest many a foreign strand,
Flowest with Gunga, Jumna bland,
Pure nectar-bosom'd thou!

October, 1900.

[NOTE :—This pretty anthem gives us an insight into the Indian national mind.]

PIYADASI.

(*From Asoka*).

THUS the royal Piyadasi,
Of the holy gods beloved,
Of the gods and of the learned,
And of all the Bhikhus holy,—
To his many subject nations,
To the peoples whom he loveth,
Speaketh in this edict boldly:

"Hear, O hear, ye subject nations;
Hear, ye peoples whom I care for,
Care for with a sire's affection
And a teacher's watchful tending:
Hear what I have carved on pillar,
Carved for guidance of the govern'd
Under monks of royal sending.

"Public highways in mine empire
By the mango-trees are shaded;
Wells and inns, refreshing, cheering,
Calm the drouthy and the weary;—
But no inn or well or highway
Hath been made by me before this
For refreshing bosoms dreary!

"Therefore shall the monks of mission,
Famed for rectitude and piety,
Famed for all the varied virtues
That 'neath heaven should adorn all,—
Unto ev'ry sect of people,
Bahman, Saman, or Niggantha,
Show the path of peace eternal.

" Would ye know that path of piety,
Know that path of glory genuine ?
Seek O seek Religion truly,
Which is neither rite nor blindness,
Which is not a heap of dogmas,
Nor a mass of sacrifices,
But an inward love and kindness.

" Are there such as spread religion
By the iron rod of harshness,
By employ of means tyrannic ?
Such is not King Piyadasi,—
Who doth look for inspiration,
And the wakening of the bosom,
Not a show of piety glossy."

June, 1901.

[NOTE :—Asoka was the first great Emperor of Northern India. He sent Buddhist missionaries to all parts of his empire and even to Ceylon. Most of his edicts were inscribed on pillars or in caves in different parts of the country These inscriptions led Cunningham, Grierson and Bühler to investigate the origin of the several scripts of India. The original of this poem is in prose.]

LOVE'S WEAL AND WOE.

(*From Chandidas*).

DEEMIN' Luve a pool o' bliss,
Ance I gaed to bathe tharein;
But, ere I cam out o' this,
Thare did fa' an evil win'.

Wha is he that will't to mak
Luve a drumlie gumlie pool?
Hech, how mony a shark an' snak
Glowr to seek and cleek the fool!

Shame o' mammie, shame o' dad,
Shame o' people an' o' clan,
Come atween me an' my lad,
Whisper 'Lea'e thy dautit man.'

O the heavy heavy smart,
For I wadna cease to feel
Something knockin' at my heart
For the lad I lo'e sae weel!

Bobbie says: O lassie hear,
Weal an' Wae be brether twain:
Whither Weal will gang, O thare
Wae maun follow wi' his train!

November, 1901.

[NOTE:—Chandidas is to Bengal what Robbie Burns is to Scotland]

A TWILIGHT SERENADE.

(*From Roby Tagore*).

THOU—my cloud of twilight sweet,
With the sunset-winged feet;
Thou—the heart's ambition high,
Pilgrim of my lonely sky.
I, combining in a whole
All the sweetness of my soul,
Thus have made thee—mine thou art,
Mine, sweet pilgrim of my heart.

With my bosom's ruddy flow
Mingling bliss and mingling woe,
I have dyed thy feet in dye,
Shadow of mine evening sky.
Mead with poison, brightest hue,
Mixt have I thy lips to dew,
Lips of purple—mine thou art,
Mine, sweet shadow of my heart.

On thine eye the letters fine
Of my fondest dream divine
I have writ, O Ranger high,
Vision of my charmèd eye.
With mine own sweet melody
I have woven, woven thee
Limb by limb—O mine thou art,
Mine, sweet vision of my heart.

July, 1902.

[NOTE:—This reminds one of Shelley's "desire of the moth for the star."]

THE IMPORTUNATE

(From a Bengali song.)

GO not back, ah do not go ;
Deck a little longer, oh—
Deck my heart's throne !
Like the restless Zephyr, why
To and fro dost ever fly ?
Sippest dew from flower to flower,
Lippest dirt from bower to bower,
Athirst, alone ?
Thee I long to capture aye,
Thou dost fly and fly away,
As of vision thou wert made,
Trembling like a thing afraid,
O sought and flown !
Come but once, my darling free,
Let me fix mine eye on thee,
Let me see thee as thou art,
Hold thee fast unto my heart,
My sweet, mine own !
I will hide thee in my soul,
Beautiful and bright and whole—
I will keep thee, keep thee mine,
Bind thee in a flowery twine,
O sweeter-grown !
Night and day and day and night,
With a sweeter softer white,
In the sweet soft couch of love
Thou shalt lie, mine own, my dove,
To vision prone !

July, 1902.

[NOTE :—Is it Shelley ? or is it Keats ?]

A HYMN TO DAWN.

COME down, O golden Dawn, with smear of red on ruddy frame,
On ruddy lip and ruddy cheek the touch of laughter-flame;
With champak-fingers gay, come, driving serried clouds away;
Thy cloth-hem waving with the sigh sent by the Southern Dame,
On breast of Earth, with face of mirth, lay down thy ruddy frame.

August, 1902.

[NOTE:—This is a modern tribute in modern form to the old Aryan Goddess Ushas, Eos or Aurora.]

LIFE'S VOYAGE.

(From Roby Tagore).

SET, set the barge afloat amid the endless sea;
Gone is all woe, gone weal, gone hope no more to be.
Before us—endless night,
We twain are pilgrims dight,
Before us lies the bight—no quarter, corner free.
All still the main doth lie,
Wide, wide the seaside dry,
All with the azure sky mingles the azure sea
No stir is there, no sound,
All with a spell seems bound,
With forward arms unwound, Night creeps in o'er the lea.
Endless the watery blue,
We'll go, a silent crew,
Upon the endless blue we'll cast one look of glee.
Whither the billows flow,
Whither the breezes blow,
O there we both will go thro' endless, endless sea.

September, 1902.

[NOTE :—Roby Tagore has infused life into the commonest of common metaphors in Indian poetry : Cf. Sankara's expression "the sea-like world."]

THE SENSE OF LONELINESS.

(*From Roby Tagore*)

FLOWER on flower is leaning over, and how softly blows the gale!
With a splash of billowy splendour flows the rivulet thro' the dale.
From a hundred bower'd arches comes the cuckoo's fourfold glee;
Wherefore, then, for what I know not, cries my heart "Ah me, ah me"?

September, 1902.

[NOTE:—Compare Wordsworth:
"In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind."]

LINES · WRITTEN IN DEJECTION.

(From a Bengali song).

WHERE the far billow laves
The shore of summer sea,
Where the moony moony caves
In the sea-foam dip the knee,
I will sit and sit alone,
See the billows one by one
Calling, calling, calling me.
To the sky and to the wind
I will speak my pain of mind,
Make my deeper passion flee.
Full of cunning and deceit
The heart of man I find;
Ha, no longer will I meet
The face of human kind;
In the social cemetery,
Nay, no longer will I tarry,
Bear no more this pain of mind.

September, 1902.

[NOTE:—Does it not remind you of Shelley?]

THE ROSEBUD.

(*From Roby Tagore*).

FALLS the Rosebud leaning slow,
Go not there, O Bee—
With a dip the mead to sip,
Get no thorn on thee.

Here a Champak, there a Bell,
Yon a Sheuli gay—
Speak to them thy pain of mind
Freely as one may.

Says the Bee " O there's the Bell,
There's the Lily too—
Shall I speak to them what yet
None were spoken to ?

" What is hidden in my core
To the Rose I'll speak—
If in that a smart I get,
Then the smart I seek ! "

September, 1902.

[NOTE :—A pretty thought ! but is it not almost French ?]

TO THE MUSE.

(*From Roby Tagore*)

I.

SPLENDOUR-WINGÈD Poesy,
Come O come, I call for thee!
Round thy form the clouds are playing,
From the Zephyr comes a kiss,
All the endless sky
With two arms spread high
Clasps thee to his bosom's bliss.

II.

In the skirts of yon sweet blue,
'Mid the clouds that shudder free,
I have built thee there a house,
O dream-wingèd Poesy.
When I'm come unto this dell,
I will call thee with a spell.
Drooping down from cloud to cloud,
Stooping low from breeze to breeze,
With a smiling face wilt thou
Come and set thee by my knees.
In the wind thy weeds will fly,
And thy tresses streaming lie.

III.

Opening slight thine eyelids sweet,
Out will bloom a simper fine,
All the mild rays of thy heart
Flashing thro' those lips of thine

Twining firm my warming neck,
Quick my young lap thou wilt deck.
With thy sweet dishevell'd hair,
Sitting, sitting I will play—
As the mellow Zephyr frisks
With the locks of blooming Day.

IV.

Kissing, kissing I will rouse
On thy lips the budding smile;
Drawing to this heart thy face,
I will sing thee dull awhile.
Hand to hand in sweet embrace
All the clouds will come apace,
They will, child-like, circle us,
Wondering as we mingle thus.
Therefore do I call on thee,
Come, my Poesy, to my side;
In calm sloth commingled both,
We shall stay here, gentle Bride.

V.

Slowly drooping from the cloud,
On my left O set thee down—
As with champak-fingers gay
Driving half the gloom away,
Mellow Dawn droops, twilight-brown.

VI.

From the breeze, O merry Muse,
Come, and near me take thy seat—
As from out some wood unknown,
Floating, floating Zephyr-blown,
Comes an odour heavenly-sweet.

VII.

From the heart's sweet harem, then,
Slowly, slowly come, my Bride—
As the leaves of Love's new vine
Gently round the bosom twine,
Spread about the dear one's feet,
Fainting, fainting by their side.

VIII.

Or, with slacken'd slender frame,
Come, and set thee down by me—
As, upon the snow-white bed
Kissing sunken eyes all dead,
Mellow Death comes, dark-hair'd dame;
As the Dawn-dew trickles free;
As, on murky Western sea,
Drops the flaming Star from high;
As, with smiling, smiling face,
On her brow one vermeil-trace,
Drooping Day comes, sunken dame,
On her husband's pyre to die
In the flaming Western sky.

IX.

Look! a faint-soul'd dying Breeze,
Absent long from bloom and bees,
To his home, the arbour, flies,
Tho' the faint feet do not rise;
Then, as by the arbour-side
Lights he on the Blossom-bride,
Whispering out the last, last word,
Sudden on her breast he dies.

Even so, Bride Poesy,
Even so come hither, dear—
On my pâle face Pity sits,
In mine eye one trickling tear.
Just a few, few sighs will fall,
Just a few, few words of pain—
Twining with two arms my heart,
In my heart's heart thou wilt reign.

September, 1902.

[NOTE :—Roby Tagore deserves to be called the Shelley of Bengal, does he not ?]

PROLOGUE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES, LL. 1-18,

(From Chaucer).

WHEN April with his drops of rain so sweet
Has pierced unto the root dry March's heat,
And bathed each vein in such a moistening shower
Whose quickening vigour calls to birth the flower;
When Zephyr also with his breath serene
Has waked to life in ev'ry wood and green
The tender tree-tops, and the youthful sun
Has in the Sign of Ram his half-course run,
And little birds are making music nice,
That slumber all the night with open eyes,
So spurring Nature does their hearts engage;
Then people long to go on pilgrimage—
And palmers long to visit foreign strands—
To distant saints, well-known in various lands;
And mostly, from the end of ev'ry shire
Of England, they to Canterbury retire,
The holy blessed martyr to behold,
Who help'd them when they were in illness' hold.

April, 1906.

[NOTE:—L.I. Sweet—I prefer to take the Chaucerian word "sote" (properly an adverb) as an adjective; see Skeat's "Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer." Lowell in "My Story Windows" refers to the beauty of this passage in Chaucer. In the last two lines, observe the French rime, with which students of Swinburne are familiar.

THE SWAN.

(From Cynewulf).

MUTE my garment, as the ground I trample,
Or in the shores tarry, or the shallows trouble.
Whilom I'm heaved up, over houses of men,
By my glory and the gales so high;
And me then widely welkin's vigour
Over folk beareth. These my feathers
Clamour loudly, and clang sweetly,
Rustle clearly, when I'm not resting on
Flood and fallow, far-roaming sprite.

April, 1906.

[NOTE:—For the metre consult Sievers' "Zur Rhythmik des Germanischen Alliterationverses" or Sweet's "Anglo-Saxon Reader."]

THE WORSHIP OF THE FIRE-GOD.

(*From Vasishtha*).

(*To the Fire-God*).

ENJOY our fuel, God of Fire, this morning;
Shine, mighty sacrificial smoke up-sending;
Touch at the heavenly summit with thy columns;
Combine together with the rays of Surya.

(*To the Sacrificers*).

He is the praised of mortal men, his greatness
Praise we, for he is pious, in their rituals
Who, blest with goodly strength, pure, thought-inspiring,
Enjoy as Gods both manners of oblation.

(*To the Worshippers*).

Fit for your reverence, divine, right powerful,
Ambassador 'twixt heaven and earth, truth-telling,
The Fire, in manly guise by Manu kindled
For sacrifice, may we applaud for ever.

(*To the Sacrificers*).

The worshippers do bear with knees a-bending
And bring up bowingly the grass to Agni;
Offering the butter-back drop-dappled object,
O sacrificers, with oblation deck him.

With proper ritual, to the doors the pious
Have gone, desiring cars in Gods' assembly;
The elders twain, their young like mothers licking,
They, like to maids in fairs, have decorated.

(*To Dawn and Night*).

Besides, the maids divine are mighty-seeming,
Both Dawn and Night, like good milk-giving heifers;
Seated on grass, by many summon'd, bounteous,
May they, full pious, for our welfare come up.

(*To the Twin Healing Gods*).

O sages twain, at offerings of mortals singers,
I wish to you, O wisdom-born, to offer;
Aloft our sacrifice bear at our summons;
These 'mid the Gods win ye, these long'd-for objects.

(*To several Gods and Goddesses*).

May Bharati with Bharatis united,
May Ila with the Gods, with mortals Agni,
Sarasvati with Sarasvatas hither,
Three Goddesses, upon this grass be seated.

(*To the All-shaping God*).

To us, now, that swift-working seed prolific,
God Tvashtri, do thou give, and widely sprinkle;
Whereof a hero, good at rites, right powerful,
Joining the pressing-stones, may spring, God-loving.

(*To the Tree-God*).

Lord of the Forest, send it forth to Gods-ward;
Agni this offering as dresser bear up;
May he, the priest most true, the oblation offer,
As he of Gods the generations knoweth.

(*To the Fire-God*).

Come, O thou God of Fire, enkindled, hither,
With Indra join'd and with the Gods so speedy;
Upon our grass sit Aditi, blest mother;
In cry of "Hail!" the Gods immortal revel.

December, 1906.

[NOTE:—Agni was an Indo-Iranian God, and figures as much in the Veda as in the Avesta. See Macdonnel's "Vedic Mythology" and Muir's "Sanskrit Texts," vol. 5.]

ON SAKUNTALA.

(From Goethe).

WILT thou the bloom of the springtide, the fruit of the year that doth wither ?
Wilt thou what charms and pleases ? wilt thou what fills and keeps fed ?
Wilt thou the earth and the heaven in one name mingle, together ?
I name, Sakuntala, thee, and so is ev'rything said.

February, 1908.

[NOTE :—This is taken from the opening page of my translation of Kalidasa's "Sakuntala and her Keepsake," the prelude of which suggested to Goethe the plan of the prologue in "Faust." "Sakuntala" has been translated again and again into most of the European languages, and by universal consent Kalidasa is called the Shakespeare of India. He lived in the 6th century, A.D., if not earlier. Of the two extant English versions, which are based on two different recensions, that of Sir Wm. Jones is far too prosaic, and that of Sir M. Monier-Williams is far too diffuse.

THE ILIAD, BK. I, LL. 1-7.

(From Homer).

SING of the anger, O Goddess, of Peleûs' offspring Achilles,
Terrible anger, that wrought to Achæans sorrows unnumber'd;
Many a stubborn soul to the nether domain it escorted,
Souls of the doughty, themselves doled out as a ravin to war-hounds,
Also to all birds wingèd; and wrought was Jupiter's counsel,
Since, from the very beginning, a discord sever'd asunder
Atreûs' offspring, the chief of the people, and godly Achilles.

March, 1908.

[NOTE:—I have kept the Greek rhythm in l. 3 and used diphthongs and full vowel sounds throughout the translation. With Matthew Arnold I believe it a mistake to turn Homer's Pegasus into Pope's rocking-horse, although I am fully conscious of "the long-resounding march and majesty divine" which may be introduced to vary the heroic couplet.]

THE ÆNEID, BK. I, LL. 1-7.

(From Vergil).

ARMS and the hero I sing, who from out Troy's borders, the foremost,
Flying, to Italy came, fate-guided, and unto Lavinian
Sea-shores; greatly at land was he toss'd, toss'd over in ocean,
Forced by the gods, for the wrath well-known of implacable Juno;
Many a trouble at war bore he, while founding his city,
Bringing to Latium his gods, whence follow'd the progeny Latin,
Fathers of Alba as well, and of Rome those battlements lofty.

March, 1908.

[NOTE.—With the authority of Dryden I reject as spurious the four opening lines of this epic which were imitated by Milton in "Paradise Regained."]

THE ROPE, PROL., LL. 1-31.

(*From Plautus*).

ARCTURUS.

WHO all the nations, all the seas and lands doth stir,
His countryman in country of the gods I am.
I'm just as you behold me, shining star all white,
An orb that ever rises in its season due
In earth and heaven. Mine the name " Arcturus " is,
At night in heaven bright I am and 'midst the gods,
In midst of mortals wandering at hours of day.
And other bodies out of sky on earth appear.
Who rules the heavenly folk and human, Jupiter,
He sendeth us to nations one to one apart,
That we all human doings, manners, virtues, faith,
May know, as he with favour helpeth ev'ryone.
Who lying claims with lying bits of evidence
Pursue, and who at court all money swear away,
Their names in full I write out and I bear to Jove.
Each day he knoweth who is after evil here.
Who here to win a law-claim try by perjury.
Bad folk, and who get false goods from the juryman,
Once more their thing adjudicated he doth judge:
And this the sinful folk into their heads do get,
That Jove they well can please with gift and sacrifice;
And pains and costs they lose: and so it happens, for
He taketh no atonement for a perjury.
Much easier he that's loyal and doth pray the gods,
Than he who is all sinful, may forgiveness find.
For this I give my warning to you, who are good,

And who do live your lives with faith and loyalty.
Hold on, that ye may afterwards be glad 'twas done.
Now, what I hither came for, I will tell the plot.

March, 1908.

[NOTE.—For the Saturnian metres of Plautus consult Wagner's "Aulularia." The influence of Plautus on the Elizabethan drama is too well known to be specially mentioned.]

TO PYRRHA.

(*From Horace*).

WHAT slender youth to thee, in midst of many a rose,
Bedew'd with flowing scents all over, plies his suit
By cave delightful, Pyrrha ?
For whom bind'st thou thine auburn hair,
Plain in thy taste so neat ? Alas, how oft on faith
And on the alter'd gods he'll cry, and at the rough
Wind-glooming ocean-levels
His wonder unaccustom'd show,
Who now enjoyeth thee believing thee all gold,
Who always thee at ease, thee always fit for love,
Doth hope,—unskill'd of breezes
Deceitful ! Hapless, unto whom,
Untried, thou shinest fair ! I, as the hallow'd wall
With letters of my vow doth show, those dripping weeds
Have hung down to the powerful
God of the sea, those weeds of mine.

May, 1908.

[NOTE.—I regard "Qui nunc te fruitur credulus aurea" as a pregnant construction, and so I translate "Who now enjoyeth thee believing *thee* all gold."]

THE PEARL, STT. 1-5.

PEARL, pleasant for the Prince's play,
All cleanly closed in gold so clear:
From out the Orient, dare I say,
I never proved her precious peer,
So round, so right-shaped in each ray,
So small, so smooth her sides they were:
Whereso' I judged of jewels gay,
I set her singly, single there.
Alas! in bower I lost her here,
Thro' grass to ground from me it got:
I dwindle, driv'n from love-sway dear,
My privy Pearl without a spot.

Since on that spot from me it sprung,
Oft have I wish'd and watch'd that weal,
That once was wont to quell my wrong,
Enhance my hap, my spirit heal.
It makes my heart but thrill full throng,
My breast in bale but boil and beal.
Yet ne'er meseem'd so sweet a song,
As season still to me let steal:
Forsooth I found full much to feel,
To think her colour clad in clot!
O mould! thou marr'st a merry meal,
My privy Pearl without a spot.

That spot with spices must needs spread,
Where jewel rich to rot is run:
And blossoms bleak and blue and red
There shine full sheer against the sun:

And flower and fruit may fall not dead,
Where down it dropt on mould all dun.
For, grass must grow from grains now shed,
Else harvest home of wheat were none.
From good each good is aye begun:
Such seemly seed might perish not,
Lest up no springing spices spun
From precious Pearl without a spot.

That spot, that I in speech explain,
I enter'd, in that orchard green,
In August, season with no rain,
When corn is cut with crooks so keen:
One hill, where roll'd the Pearl amain,
Was shaded with herbs full sheer and sheen-
With clove, and ginger, gromwell-grain
And peonies powder'd all between.
If to the sight it seem'd so clean,
A fairer fragrance thence did float,
Where dwells that worthy one, I ween,
My precious Pearl without a spot.

Before that spot my hands I bent,
For care full cold that to me caught;
Dire dole with din thro' bosom went,
Tho' wit to set my spirit sought.
I plain'd my Pearl that there was pent,
With fearful doubts that firmly fought;
Tho' kind Christ made me know content
My wretched will to woe was wrought.
I fell on ground with flowers fraught,
Such odour to my brain then shot;

I slid, on stroke by slumber brought,
On precious Pearl without a spot.

June, 1908.

[NOTE.—Observe the use of both alliteration and rime and the complexity of the rime system; and yet the thought does not seem to be fettered! The Northeners of the transition age were glorious; compare Huchown. Pearl—Probably the actual name of the girl was Marguerite. Thrill full throng—"Throng" is an adverb; see Gollancz's "Pearl." Boil and beal—"Beal" is a northern provincial word; see Murray's "New English Dictionary." A merry meal—This is a regular Middle English phrase; see Murray's "New English Dictionary."]

THE DIVINE COMEDY: HELL, CANTO I, LL. 1-36

(*From Dante*).

MIDWAY upon the journey of our life
I found me in a wood with gloom all gray,
For the right way was with disorder rife.

Ah me! how hard a thing it is to say
How wild and rough and stern this wood did lie,
Which but to think is to renew dismay.

So bitter 'tis, 'tis little more to die:
But to unfold the good I there did find,
I'll tell of other things I there did spy.

I tell not well how there my steps inclined,
So full, about that hour, I was of sleep,
When the true way I stray'd to leave behind.

But when I was at foot of hillock steep,
There where that valley deep did terminate,
Which caused with fear my stricken heart to creep,

I lookt on high, and saw its shoulders great
Clad in the radiance of that wandering Sphere,
Which guideth others thro' each alley straight.

Then render'd calm a little was the fear.
Which long had lived my bosom's lake to throng,
The night that I did pass with pain so drear.

And as he, who with panting breath full strong
Hath scaped from out the ocean to the shore,
Turns to the dangerous wave, and watches long:

Just so my mind, which still did fly before,
Turn'd backward to behold the strait defile,
Which living person left not evermore.

When I had soothed with rest my body's toil,
My way I took up thro' the strand all bare,
The firmer foot the lower all the while;

And lo! just where began the upland, there,
A Leopard, light and very nimble too,
Which was enwrapt with spotted skin and fair;

And from before my face it never flew,
Nay, so it hinder'd me upon my way,
That often to return I backward drew.

June, 1908.

[NOTE:—Notice the "triple rime," which was first attempted in English by Chaucer. I do not preserve the feminine endings of the original, as they are a mere accident of the Italian language, just as masculine endings are an accident of English. Look up the allegorical sense of the imagery in Longfellow's unrimed translation with notes.]

THE SLAUGHTER OF MEGHANAD: BK. I, LL. 1-32.

(From Michael M. S. Dutt).

WHEN, fallen in the front of fray, the chief of heroes high,
Heroic-arm'd, did go adown unto the town of Death
Right early,—say, O Goddess fair with nectar-flowing speech,
What hero great was chosen out unto the captain's post,
And sent again to battle by the Lord of Demonkind,
The foe of Raghav; by what scheme the source of Demons' hope,
Great Indra's Victor, Meghanad, invincible on earth,
The Lord of Urmila destroy'd, and drove out Indra's dread.
I bow unto thy lotus-feet, all dull of intellect
I am, I call yet once again on thee, O white of hand,
Speech-Goddess! Just as, mother mine, thou didst alight and sit
Upon Valmiki's tasteful tongue, as on a lotus-throne,
What time with sharply-shotten shaft, all in a wood profound,
The crane together with his bride the fowler pierced full deep,
So to thy bounden thrall do come, and be thou kind, O good!
Who knows thy majesty divine throughout this world all round?
The man who was the worst of men among all human kind,
On theft intent, the same became, thro' favour of thy gift,

Immortal, as immortal is the Lord of Uma fair !
O thou boon-giver, by thy boon the robber Ratnakar
Was Ratnakar of poesy ! 'Tis at thy touch divine
The beauty of a sandal-tree the poison-tree doth bear !
Ah, mother ! such a virtue great may there be in thy thrall ?
But then, the one that worthless is among her progeny,
Dull-brain'd, the parent's tenderness is shown forth unto him
The most of all. So thou uprise, uprise, O kindly One,
All world's beloved ! I'll, mother, sing, with high thoughts flowing o'er,
A mighty song ; uprise, and shield thy thrall with shadowing feet.
And thou, too, gentle Goddess, come, thou honey-making bee,
O Fancy ! from the poet's mind, as from a flower-fraught wood,
Take mead, and build a honeycomb, from whence all Gouda's folk,
Contented, shall imbibe their fill of nectar evermore.

June, 1908.

[NOTE :—Ratnakar the robber became Valmiki the bard ; so runs the Indian tradition. He is called the Homer of India, and is known all over the country through Krittibas, Tulsidas and other Mediæval writers. The fourteen-syllabled blank verse used here, has a pause usually at the eighth syllable and occasionally at the seventh. The original metre is entirely syllabic and has natural accents as in French. Michael Dutt's model in this legendary epic was Homer. He did not live to finish his projected national epic called " The conquest of Ceylon," which was to imitate Vergil and to vie with the projected " Arturiad " of Milton. His favourite European authors were Homer, Vergil, Ovid, Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, Milton, and Camoens ; and to some extent Shakespeare. He gave Bengal the blank verse, the Italian sonnet, the *vers libres*, and several choice lyrical metres, as well as the literary drama.]

JERUSALEM DELIVERED: CANTO I,

STT. 1-4.

(*From Tasso*).

I SING the pious arms, and, chief of band,
Him who the mighty tomb of Christ did free:
Much wrought he both by counsel and by hand,
Much in the gloroius conquest suffer'd he:
And him in vain Hell cross'd: in vain did stand,
Arm'd, Asia's folk and Afric's mixèdly:
For Heaven did help him, and beneath the sign
Hallow'd led back his wand'ering friends, in fine.

O Muse, thou who with fading laurel tire
Dost not entwine in Helicon thy brow,
But up in Heaven among the blessed quire
Hast golden crown of deathless stars enow,
Breathe thou into my bosom heavenly fire,
Tune thou this song of mine, and pardon thou,
If truth I weave with trinkets, deck in part
With other charms than those thy rolls impart.

Thou know'st, there runs the world, where most doth glide
With its own sweets Parnassus' luring rill,
And that the truth, to tender verse allied,
Hath suaded those of sway impatient still;
So for the sickly child we sprinkle wide
The goblet's margin with a grateful swill;
The bitter juice, mistaken he doth take,
And gets his life anew thro' his mistake.

Thou lofty-soul'd Alfonso, who hast wrung
From fortune's spite, and lead'st to haven sound,
Me wandering abroad, the rocks among,
And toss'd among the waves, and well-nigh drown'd;
With gladsome brow receive this book of song,
Which bring I as in vow to theeward bound.
Perchance one day the prophet's daring quill
May write of thee what now it hints us still.

June, 1908.

[NOTE:—Although hardly approaching the sublimity of Milton's "Paradise Lost," and still less the beauty of Milton's "Paradise Regained," Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered" is a true Christian epic in a sense in which neither "Paradise Lost" nor "Paradise Regained" is. These two poems as well as Dante's "Divine Comedy" seem to me to belong to a higher species of composition to which the name of "epic" should not be applied. The same remark holds good of the so-called Cædmonian poems and of the Old Saxon "Heliand." Cf. Hesiod's "Days and Works," as opposed to Homer's "Iliad."]

THE LUSIAD: CANTO I, STT. 1-4

(*From Camoens*).

THE arms, and eke the heroes famed afar,
Who, from the Western Lusitanian plain,
Thro' seas ne'er braved by other sailors' spar,
Did pass beyond the farthest Taprobane,—
Who, full of force in peril and in war,
With promise more than that of human main,
Among a race remote did edify
A kingdom new, which rose so very high;

And eke the memory, that glorious stands,
Of all those kings, who sought to spread and found
The Faith and Empire, and the sinful lands
Of Afric and Asia went to pillage bound;
And those who by the deeds of doughty hands
Sought hard to be from law of death unbound;
I'll sing and sound abroad thro' ev'ry part,
If I have aid of so much skill and art.

Cease the sage Grecian, and the Trojan cease,
To brag of mighty voyage which they made;
Hold Alexander, Trajan hold his peace,
For fame of victories which long decay'd;
For lo! I sing the high-soul'd Portuguese,
Whom Neptune deep and stubborn Mars obey'd;
Cease all, of whom the Muse hath sung of yore,
For, higher doth another valour soar.

And ye, my Tagian Nymphs, did so create
Within my soul a new-born glowing skill;
If oft my humble verse did celebrate
Full cheerfully my faith upon your rill,
Give me a strain now, lofty and elate,
A style grandiloquent and flowing still;
For so shall Phœbus for your waves ordain
That they shall never envy Hippocrene.

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—Camoens' model was Tasso. Notice the "octave rime." This translation will be found to differ very widely from Mickle's, which gives the reader no idea of the original.]

PIERS THE PLOWMAN: PROL., LL. 1-22.

(From Langland).

IN a summer season, when soft was the sun,
I shaped me in shrouds, as I a shepherd were;
In habit of a hermit unholy of works,
Went wide thro' this world, wonders to hear.
And on a May morning, on Malvern hills,
A fancy befell me of a fairy, I thought;
I was weary of wandering, and went to repose
On a broad bank, by a brooklet's side;
And as I lay and lean'd and lookt on the waters,
I slumber'd full sleepy, it sounded so merry.

Then began I to meet a marvellous vision,
That I was in a wild wood, I wot not ever where;
As I lookt into the east and aloft to the sun,
I saw a tower on a hill's top, truly well-wrought;
A deep dale beneath, a dungeon therein,
With deep ditches and dark and dreadful to see.
A fair field full of folk I found there between,
Of all manner of men, the mean and the rich,
Working and wandering at the world's demand.
Some put themselves to the plough, play'd full seldom,
In setting and in sowing sweated full hard,
And won what the wasteful with gluttony destroy.

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—Langland was a poet of the people, and kept up the old native alliterative metre, though he forgot its true music. Shepherd—Langland's word "shepe" means "shepherd"; see Skeat's edition of "The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman."]

BEOWULF: PREFACE, LL. 1-11.

LO! we Gar-Danes, in days gone by,
Many folk-kings' fame have hearken'd:
How those potentates put forth prowess.
Oft Scyld Scef-son, scathful thief-gangs,
Multitudes many, of mead-seats deprived.
Earls he urged on, since earliest he was
Found out fee-less: so for favour he lookt,
Wax'd under welkin, worthily throve,
So to him each one of side-sitters
On the whale-alley must be heedful,
Tender tribute: he was a true monarch.

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—Gar-Danes—Lit. Spear-Danes; see Wyatt's "Beowulf." Fee-less—Lit. cattle-less; moneyless. This poem is the only true national epic of England; the interest of the story and the scenery are essentially English, although the historical setting is Scandinavian. A patchwork of rimeless lyrics written of late by Mr. Alfred Noyes under the title of "Drake: An English Epic" calls forth a remark: it could have been *an* English epic, if it were written in the stately "octave rime" of Tasso or Camoens; but it could not be *the* English epic, as the projected "Arturiad" of Milton in his own blank verse would have been, if it foreshadowed the later glory of England.]

THE CAPTURE OF CORDOVA AND SEVILIA: LAISSE I.

NOW hear from me, both great and lesser folk,
A goodly song of deeds by Frenchmen shown.
'Tis of Aymeri, the brave and plucky-soul'd,
And of Butor, a paynim false at core,
Who took up battle with Lord Guibert the bold
In Salerie were the warriors good at blows,
At early morn, what time the dawn-beams broke;
And all the sentry descended from the holds;
The sun did shine, which cast a mighty glow,
By which were caught the palaces and holds.
The mass is chanted by our archbishop bold,
Torpin of Rheims, no better I heard before;
Agaie he marries, the Holy Lord before;
Her took that day Lord Guibelin the bold;
His ring of gold she on best finger wore;
Upon it writ, our Saviour's name did show:
Who had it on ne'er fear'd, by fortune sore,
That he be kill'd or any day o'erthrown,
So much the ring of worth and value own'd.
Upon a pallet, which all its colour show'd,
Torpin did bless and consecrate them both,
And then commends them the glorious God before.
Who grant them strength and chivalry and force.
Right soon was chanted the mass we honour most;
The French great joyance and mighty ardour show;
Of the great joyance, which 'mongst them they behold,
Out blare the sentry, and sing the jongleurs hoar,
And lays of Britain by viol-players are told,
And out from England some harpers there did go,

By Auvergne's men a song of love is told.
Great is the wedding in garden on the hold.
Agaie is taken, by duke and count she's borne,
And made to seat her anear the greater board.
Before her face there sing the jongleurs hoar.
God! with what grief this day of marriage wore!
For aught I know, no greater did I behold.
Upon these words, appears a rascal, lo,
A Saracen, on whom God shame bestow,
Whom thither sent Judas from the Amir old.
To tell his lying story.

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—For the metre consult Densusianu's edition of "La Prise de Cordres et de Sebille." Observe that the alexandrine was not yet in vogue.]

THE RACE OF RAGHU: CANTO I,

VS. 1-10.

(From Kalidasa).

LIKE Speech and Sense allied all near, so Speech and Sense may on me fall,
The world's great Parents I revere, Parvati and the Lord of All.

Where is the Sun-born race, and where, with narrow ken endued, my brain!
Mad, long I on a raft to fare across the all too hard-cross'd main!

A fool, for fame of poet sought, I'll gain but ridicule and spite,
As, lured by fruit by tall men raught, a dwarf with arm uplifted quite!

Or haply, there's a door of word made thro' this race by bards of yore;
As thro' a gem by needle bored, like thread I'll enter thro' the door.

So I, the kings all pure from birth, whose works till rise of fruit were wrought,
The lords of all the sea-girt earth, whose cars were up to heaven brought,

Who offer'd to the fire due rite, whose suitors gain'd what they did sue,
Who suited to the crime the wite, whose waking was in season due,

Who stored their wealth for bounty's name, who all for
truth but little spake,
Who conquer'd for the sake of fame, who met with
wives for offspring's sake,

Who all in childhood learnt their lore, in youth each
worldly good did try,
In age did live like sages hoar, and musing in the end
did die,

The Raghus' lofty line I'll tell, tho' meagre wealth of
words be mine,
For, on mine ear their merits fell, and urged me to this
rash design.

To this the good their ears should lean,—the verdict
"good" or "bad" is theirs;
For, in the fire the gold is seen, if pure, or if some dross
it bears.

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—Leaving out the two great national epics of India, the "Race of Raghu" is by far the greatest epic in Sanskrit literature. There is a pretty readable English version of it by P. de Lacy Johnstone.]

MERCILESS BEAUTY.

(*From Chaucer*).

I.—Captivity.

YOUR two sweet eyes will slay me suddenly:
I cannot hold in me their beauteous sheen,
So wounds it thro' and thro' my heart full keen.
If but your word will heal up hastily
My heart's sore wound, while still the wound is green
Your two sweet eyes will slay me suddenly:
I cannot hold in me their beauteous sheen.
Upon my truth I tell you faithfully,
That you are of my life and death the queen,
For with my death the truth shall all be seen:
Your two sweet eyes will slay me suddenly:
I cannot hold in me their beauteous sheen,
So wounds it thro' and thro' my heart full keen.

II.—Rejection.

So has your beauty from your heart seduced
Pity, that hardly it avails me to complain·
For Power holds your mercy in his chain.
Tho' guiltless, thus my death have you induced.
I tell you true, I do not need to feign;
So has your beauty from your heart seduced
Pity, that hardly it avails me to complain.
Alas! that Nature has in you produced
Such beauty great, that no man may attain
To mercy, tho' he perish for the pain!
So has your beauty from your heart seduced
Pity, that hardly it avails me to complain;
For Power holds your mercy in his chain.

III.—Escape.

Since I, from Love escaping, am so fat,
I never think I'm in his prison lean;
Since I am free, I count him not a bean.
He may give answer, saying this or that;
I do not care, I speak that which I mean.
Since I, from Love escaping, am so fat,
I never think I'm in his prison lean.
Now Love has struck my name out of his slate,
And he is struck out of my books full clean
For evermore; there is none other mean.
Since I, from Love escaping, am so fat,
I never think I'm in his prison lean;
Since I am free, I count him not a bean.

July, 1908.

[Note.—Observe the construction of this beautiful Triple Roundel.]

THE KING'S QUAIR: STT. 1-7.

(From James I. of Scotland).

HIGH in the heaven's figure circular
The ruddy stars were twinkling as the fire;
And, in the Aquarius, Cynthia shining far
Did wash her tresses like the golden wire,—
Who late erewhile, in fair and fresh attire,
Thro' Capricorn did heave her horns full bright:
Now northward came adown the midmost night.

When as I lay in bed awake alone,
Just roused from sleep a little while before,
Unto my mind full many things came on,
Now this, now that; I cannot say wherefore,
But sleep, for the world's craft, I could no more;
Which then I knew not better to beguile
Than taking up a book to read the while:

Whereof the name is call'd full properly
Boethius, faithful to the author old,
Showing the counsel of philosophy
Collected by that senator noble-soul'd
Of Rome, who once on earth high place did hold,
And, from his wealth awhile by Fortune rent,
Was doom'd to poverty in banishment:

And there to hear this worthy lord and clerk,
His matter sweet, full of morality;
His florid quill so well he set to work,
Describing first his old prosperity,
And out of that his later misery;
And then how he, in his poetic strain,
His comfort in philosophy did gain.

For which, tho' I on purpose from my book
To steal a sleep at the same time began,
Ere I could stop, I wish'd the more to look
Upon the writing of this noble man,
Who in himself the full recovery won

And so the virtue of his youth before
Was in his age the ground of his delight;
Fortune turn'd him the back, and on that score
His comfort there he makes, that he is quite
Freed from such doubtful worldly appetite;
And so his penance worthily he takes
And by his virtue all-sufficing makes,

With many a noble reason, to his taste,
A-writing in his beauteous Latin tongue,
So full of fruit, rhetorically placed,
Which to declare my brain is much too young;
And so I let him pass, and, in my song,
Proceed I will unto my theme once more,
Whereof I treat, and give digressions o'er.

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—King James was a prisoner in England and there learnt the Chaucerian tradition. But, unlike Chaucer's, his style is Latinistic, and therefore Scotch. The name "rime royal" given to the Chaucerian stanza is due to him. The device of a sleep is quite mediæval.]

THE LAY OF THE NIBELUNGS: ADVENTURE I.

KRIMHILD.

TO us, in olden stories, is many a wonder told
Of warriors praise-deserving, of deeds full great and bold,
Of peace and high carousal, of joy and bitter tear;
Of boldest chieftains' fighting you shall now a wonder hear.

In Burgundy there grew up a maiden fair of sheen,
In all the lands there never a fairer could be seen;
She bore the name of Krimhild, and was a woman fair,
For whom had many a gallant to lose his life for e'er.

That lovely-looking maiden to woo, did seem but right;
For her did yearn bold chieftains; no person bore her spite.
All fair beyond all measure, such was her life refined;
The lady young had virtues to grace all womankind.

Three kings did seek to guard her, noble and wealthy they:
Sir Gunther and Sir Gernot, those chieftains praised in fray,
And Giselher the younker, a gallant fighter hard.
The lady was their sister; the chiefs had her for ward.

The princes were all gentle, and born of noble race,
Bold with a might unmeasured, those chieftains rich in grace;
The great Burgundian country, so people named their land;
They work'd full startling wonders since then in Etzel's strand.

At Worms by Rhine's great river they dwelt with all their might;
To them, their land all over, did homage many a knight
With praise and therewith honour until the end of life.
They had a woful ending, since by two ladies' strife.

A wealthy queen their mother, Dame Utè named was she;
Their father's name was Dankrat; wide lands he left them three,
When he this life departed, a doughty wealthy man;
He, even while a younker, had full mighty honour won.

The three kings all of them were, as I have said before,
Endued with full high valour; to them allegiance bore
Even the goodliest chieftains, of whom it hath been said,
Right bold they were and stubborn, in fighting ne'er afraid.

There was of Tronjè Hagen, and eke his brother fair,
Dankwart the very nimble, Ortwein of Metz was there,
And eke the two high margraves, Erkwart and Gerè hight,
And Volker come from Alsace, with ev'ry valour dight.

Rumold the kitchen-master, a gallant fighter hard,
Sindold and Hunold also; these princes had to guard
The rites and eke the honours, the three kings' men were they.
They call'd now many chieftains, whose names I cannot say.

Dankwart he was the marshall; there was his nephew free,
The steward of the three kings, Ortwein of Metz was he;

Sindold he was cup-bearer, a gallant fighter hard;
Hunold was chamber-waiter: they could high honour guard.

Of all this mighty service, and of their well-known might,
And of their great high valour, and of their homage right,
Which all the princes guarded with pride their lives throughout,
Of these no man were able to give the story out.

There came a dream on Krimhild, 'mid virtues she did bear,
That she a savage falcon full many a day did rear,
And that two eagles tore him, and this her eyes before;
To her in the world could happen no grief she felt so sore.

The dream she then to Utè ,her gentle mother, told.
She, kind in her own manner, the meaning did unfold:
"The falcon which thou sawest, that is a noble wight:
Right well may God defend him, thou must have lost him quite."

"What sayest thou of husband, O mother dear to me?
The wooing of a chieftain I will not ever see.
All fair will I be living until my death for e'er,
So that I may a husband's keen sorrow never bear."

"Now swear thou not too surely," her mother then did speak;
"Should ever heart's full pleasure in the world a woman seek,
That came of husband's wooing: thou wert a beauteous wife,
If God do not deny thee a right good hero's life."

" O leave alone the counsel," she spake, " O lady mine :
There is of many a woman much proof that clear doth shine ;
How they do live with sorrow the youngest one can show :
I shall abide a maiden ; so none can give me woe."

In her high virtues many, which she did guard full fair,
She lived, the noble maiden, full many a day with cheer
So that she knew of no one, whom she might love in life.
And yet was she in honour a right good hero's wife.

It was the selfsame falcon, that she in dream did see,
Whereof her mother told her : how sore revenged was she
Upon her nearest kinsmen, who had the slaughter done !
For one man's death did perish full many a mother's son.

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—The best text is that of Golther, which I have followed in the main. In l. 2 I prefer the reading "kuonheit" to "arebeit," and in ll. 25 and 26 I reject the reading adopted by Golther. I have given regularity to the irregular metre of the original, my metre being that of Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome" without its occasional internal rimes and occasional riming octosyllabic lines. Take away the last two stanzas of this old German poem, and what you have left is—nothing !]

THE MONK'S TALE : STT. 1—4.

(From Chaucer).

I WILL bewail, in tragic stylé profound,
The fate of those that stood in high degree,
And fell so low, no remedy was found
To bring them out of their adversity;
For certain 'tis, when Fortune seeks to flee,
There is no man her progress can withhold;
Let no one blindly trust prosperity;
Beware of these examples true and old.

With Lucifer, tho' he an angel were,
And not a man, with him will I begin;
Because, tho' Fortune can no angel dare,
From high degree yet fell he for his sin
Down into hell pit, where yet is in.
O Lucifer! most bright of angels all,
Now art thou Satan, canst no freedom win
From sorrows, into which has led thy fall.

Lo Adam, in the field of Damascene,
With God's own finger fashion'd fair was he,
And not begot of human seed unclean,
And held all Paradise, except one tree,
Never had worldly man such high degree
As Adam, till he for misgovernance
Was driven out of high prosperity
To labour, and to hell, and to mischance.

Lo Samson, he whose coming was proclaim'd
By angel long before his birth could be,
Who was to God Almighty sacred named,
And stood in noble state, while he could see.

There never was another such as he,
To speak of strength and also of hardihood;
But to his wives he told his secret free,
For which he kill'd himself in wretched mood.

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—The fall of those in power was one of the favourite themes of mediæval English poets, *e.g.*, Lydgate and Sackville. The modern idea is that of Longfellow:

"Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of Time."]

EARLY BRITAIN.

(*From Andrew of Wyntoun*).

BRITAIN blest the best must be
Of all the islands in the sea,
Where flowers are many on fields full fair,
Whole of hue and wholesome of air.
All kinds of corn there copiòus meet,
Peas and oats and hops and wheat;
Both fruit on tree and fish in flood;
And to all cattle pasture good.
Solinus says, in Britain's soil,
Some places grow apart from toil
Such grass that sometimes cattle there
Cannot be kept from too much fare;
Their food must turn them to decay,
To rot, or burst, or die some day.
There woodlands wild have wealth at will;
There herds do hide in holm and hill;
There bend the boughs for burdening birth;
Both merle and mavis make their mirth.
There's hunting of what deer soever,
And right good fishing in the river;
All fish in plenty there abound,
And needful things for man are found.

By west of Britain there doth lie
All the land of Ireland high,
Which is a land of noble air,
Of firth and field and flowers full fair.

No kind of venomous beast there may
Live or last beyond a day,
As eft, or adder, frog, or toad,
Tho' there you see them keep abode.

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—A native of Britain writing about Britain quotes Solinus! This is one of the several charms of the poem. Merle and mavis—Blackbird and thrush.]

CÆDMON'S HYMN.

(From the so-called Cædmon).

NOW we should worship heaven-land's Warden,
Might of the Maker, and His mental thought,
Work Worthy-sire-like; as He of wonders, each one,
Ever the Master, order'd the beginning.
He erst did make earthly children
Heaven as high roof holy Maker;
Then the middle world; man's great Warden,
Ever the Master, built there-after
Fields for folk's use, Friend Almighty.

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—Compare this with the hymn of Adam and Eve in Milton's "Paradise Lost."]

THE ADVENTURES OF ARTHUR: A STAVE.

(*From Huchown*).

BARE was her body, and black to the bone,
All clogg'd with clay, uncomelily clad;
It wofully cursed, it wail'd like woman lone,
That neither on head nor on hair a hood it had.
It stopt, it was astounded, it stood as a stone,
It was demented, it moan'd, it mused as if mad.
To that grisly ghost Sir Gawain is gone.
He ran to it with a rush, for he never had dread;
For dread had he never, know ye who read me right;
On the joint of her jowl
A toad was pecking her poll,
Her eyes were hollow with hole,
Blazing coal-bright

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—Observe the construction of this beautiful stave, and compare the metre of Huchown with that of the "Pearl."]

LINES ON FREEDOM.

(*From Barbour*).

OH! Freedom is a noble thing!
Freedom to man all bliss doth bring;
Freedom to man all solace gives;
He lives at ease who freely lives!
A noble heart may have no ease,
Nor aught else that his mind may please,
If Freedom fails; for, bliss all free
Is cared for more than aught else be.
He who has lived a freeman aye,
May not know well the sad sad way,
The anguish, nor the wretched fate,
That's coupled with a thrall's estate.

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is one of the earliest expressions of the Scottish sense of freedom, and is referred to by Scott in his "History of Scotland."]

SWELLFOOT THE TYRANT, PROL., LL. 1—13.

(From Sophocles).

Swellfoot.

O CHILDREN, ye of Cadmus, old the youngest brood,
What is this session ye are sitting here for me,
With supplicative wreathèd branches chapleted?
At once the city with the smoke of incense teems,
At once with pæans and with rising sounds of groans;
I, thinking proper, not thro' other messengers
To hear, O children, by myself am hither come,
The all-renownèd Swellfoot—such the name I bear.
But say, old father, since by nature thou art fit
For these to speak forth, in what mood delay ye here,
All deep-affrighted, or believing I shall wish
To give all succour? for, unfeeling I, indeed,
Would be, no pity showing to such seat as this.

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—I am indebted to Kennedy for one or two expressions. It is interesting to compare the quantitative metres of the Greek drama with the qualitative metres of the Roman.]

LOVES, BK. I, EL. 5.

(From Ovid).

HOT was the air, and the day's midmost hour wholly was ended;
Placed were my limbs to be soothed all in the middle of bed.
Open'd wide was a part of the window, the window was part-closed,
Just as the woods full oft hold but a shadow of light,
Just as the dim twilight doth glimmer, as Phœbus is flying,
Or, when night is retired, while yet unrisen is day.
Yon light should to the maids that are bashful of manner be given,
'Neath which shame all shy hopeth to find her a nook.
Lo, my Corinna appears, wrapt o'er in a mantle ungirded;
Touching the white of her neck parted asunder her hair:
Just as, they say, to the chamber of wedding Semiramis, well-shaped,
Wended, and Laïs as well, courted of many a man.

[NOTE.—This passage illustrates Ovid's beautiful style, which lent some of its sweetness to Shakespeare's early poems.]

SARAH AT THE BATH.

(*From Hugo*).

SARAH, in her sloth full fair,
Poises her
In a hammock spread upon
Top of basin of a spring
Gathering
Water from Ilyssus drawn,
And the swing that may not last
Is well glass'd
In the mirror seen well thro',
With the gentle bather white
Leaning light,
Leaning light herself to view.
Ev'ry time the boat-like swing,
Tottering,
Skims the surface in its flight,
O'er the water all astir
Flash forth her
Beauteous feet and neck so bright.
She her timid foot doth set
On wave wet,
Where a moving picture veers,
Makes its marble foot grow red,
And, as mad,
At the water's freshness fleers.
Stay thou here, and hide, and cower!
In an hour
Thou wilt see with glowing eye
Rise from bath the artless fair,
Wholly bare,
Placing hands on arms awry,!

For, all like a star doth shine
A maid fine
Leaving bath of billow clear,
Searching if there comes no man,
Quivering wan,
Wholly dripping in the air!

She is there, 'neath leafage thick,
Waking quick
At the slightest sound of woe
And a-reddening, for a fly
Skims her by,
Like a pome about to blow.

All you see, that robe or veil
Doth unveil:
In her flaming azure eyne,
Her bright look, which nought can bar,
Is the star
That in heaven blue doth shine.

Water wiped on frame doth drain
Like to rain,
As upon a poplar white;
As if drop by drop did fall,
One and all,
Pearls from out her necklace bright.

Sarah, heedless in her sloth,
Is all loth
Her sweet sports to finish quite;
Ever doth she poise her free
Silently,
And she goes in murmur light:

" Oh ! were I a chieftainess,
Sultaness,—
Baths of amber I had ta'en
In a bath of marble-stone
Near a throne
Deckt by golden griffins twain !

" I would keep the silken swing
That doth cling
To the frame about to swoon ;
I would keep the sofa-bed
Whence is shed
Perfume bringing love's sweet boon.

" Bare, I could be skipping high,
'Neath the sky,
In the garden's little brook,
Fearing not to see in shade
Of dark glade
Two bright eyes with sudden look.

" One would have to risk his head,
Worrièd,
And to brave, to see me now,
Sabre bare of footman grave
And the slave
White of teeth and black of brow !

" Next, I could, without a pest
To my rest,
Let, with all my garbs of queen,
Train along the flag-stones wide
Slippers pied,
Clad with broider'd ruby's sheen."

Thus she speaks in princess' style,
And the while
Poises her, with love-dreams gay,
Laughing youthful maiden bright.
Mindless quite
Of the rapid wings of day.

And the wave, for bather's foot
Caring not,
Spirts out on the turf serene,
On her garment plaited light,
Poised aright
On the boughs of boskage green.

Nathless, from the meadows' ends
Her young friends
Take their way all in a band;
Lo, their gentle bevy gay
Fly away,
Holding one another's hand.

Each one in her way doth sing,
Pass, and bring
This reproach into her song:
"Oh! the girl her laziness,
She doth dress
On a harvest-day so long!"

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—The conception of simple and easy-going Sarah is highly artistic, and quite French.]

THE DREAM OF ANACREON.

(*From the Anacreontea*).

THRO' the hours of night a-sleeping
On the ocean-purple carpets,
Steep'd in utmost bliss with Bacchus,
I did seem, with feet full nimble,
To pursue a chase full rapid,
In the midst of maidens sporting:
And I was reviled by younkers,
With a softer form than Bacchus,
Hurling at me terms opprobrious,
On account of these fair maidens:
And, as I desired to kiss them,
All escaped me waked from slumber:
And I, left alone, all wretched,
Once again did seek to rest me.

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—Whoever wrote this dream of Anacreon certainly caught the true spirit of the Teian bard. The metre of Longfellow's "Hiawatha," which is here adopted, is the nearest English equivalent of the original metre.]

THE LONGING OF RADHA.

(From Jayadeva).

WHILE I to the lonesome arbour home am come,
and he reclined in secret lieth darkling,
And while I look at all the skies in wonder dumb,
and he doth laugh thro' might of bliss
a-sparkling,

O my maid,
make thou Kesi's Foe, the noble,
Go a-sporting all with me,
himself thro' thought of Love's intensest longing
all in trouble.

While I feel ashamed the very first we meet,
he with hundred coaxings sly looks tender,
While I speak to him in simper soft and sweet,
and slack mine irksome raiment he doth render,

O my maid,
make thou Kesi's Foe, the noble,
Go a-sporting all with me,
himself thro' thought of Love's intensest longing
all in trouble.

And while I am upon the bed of leaflets placed,
and he is long upon my bosom sunken,
While I have bestow'd my kisses and embraced,
he embracing of my lip is drunken,

O my maid,
make thou Kesi's Foe, the noble,
Go a-sporting all with me,
himself thro' thought of Love's intensest longing
all in trouble.

While thro' growing sloth I let mine eyelids fall,
and all with bristles fair his cheeks do bicker,
While with dews of toil my frame is wetted all,
and he with winsome wine of Love doth flicker,

O my maid,
make thou Kesi's Foe, the noble,
Go a-sporting all with me,
himself thro' thought of Love's intensest longing
all in trouble.

While I like the cuckoo's grateful warble coo,
and he the lore of Love hath comprehended,
While with loosen'd blossoms slips my braid all thro',
and he hath fondly toy'd with orbs deep-bended,

O my maid,
make thou Kesi's Foe, the noble,
Go a-sporting all with me,
himself thro' thought of Love's intensest longing
all in trouble.

And while on feet my jewel-anklets tinkling beat,
and he hath fill'd the whole extent of blisses,
While my zone link-broken renders speeches sweet,
he with hand on hair doth give me kisses,

O my maid,
make thou Kesi's Foe, the noble
Go a-sporting all with me,
himself thro' thought of Love's intensest longing
all in trouble.

And while my sense at time of bliss brings sloth,
he doth shut amain his lotus-eye like burgeon,
And while my creeper-frame impatient falleth loth,
and Madhu's Slayer rising Love doth urge on

O my maid,
make thou Kesi's Foe, the noble,
Go a-sporting all with me,
himself thro' thought of Love's intensest longing
all in trouble.

Dan Jayadeva's utterance is this,
mark'd by Madhu's Foeman's passion-flow exceeding tender;
Whate'er the anxious cowherd-bride of bliss
mention'd, may it spread and charms engender.

O my maid,
make thou Kesi's Foe, the noble,
Go a-sporting all with me,
himself thro' thought of Love's intensest longing
all in trouble.

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—Jayadeva's poem has been aptly called the "Indian Song of Songs" by Sir Edwin Arnold. The love-story in it is explained as an allegory of the communion of the human soul with the Divine Soul through faith.]

URVASI.

(From Roby Tagore)

NO mother thou, nó daughter thou, thou art no bride,
O maiden fair and free,
O habitant of Nandan, Urvasi!
When Eve on cattle-folds doth light, her frame all tired, with down-drawn golden veil,
Thou, in a corner of some home, dost never light the lamp of even pale;
With feet in doubt all faltering, with trembling breast, with lowly-fallen sight,
With smiles all soft, thou goest not, in bashfulness, to bridal couch bedight
In the still heart of night.
As is the early rise of Dawn, a veilless maiden fair,
Thou art untroubled e'er.

As blooms a flower that hath no stalk, so spreading out by thine own self in thee,
When didst thou blossom forth, O Urvasi?
All at the front of primal spring, thou didst arise from out the full-churn'd deep;
In right hand was the nectar-cup, the poison-bowl in left hand didst thou keep;
The billow-frowning mighty main, all bound by charm like winding-gaited snake,
Did fall adown beneath thy feet; its myriad hoods that rose full wide awake
Did homage for thy sake.
O jasmine-white, O naked fair, by all the Gods obey'd,
Thou art a blameless maid.

Say, wast thou e'er at any time, a tender bud that its own prime did see,
O thou of youth immortal, Urvasi ?
Upon the darksome ocean-floor, say, at whose home, a-sitting all alone,
Amid a heap of gems and pearls, wast wont to be on childhood's frolick prone ?
In carverns lit by jewel-lamps, the sea all loud with billowy music deep,
A stainless laughter on thy face, amid a couch prepared with coral-heap,
Say, on whose lap didst sleep ?
As soon thou wokest in the world, thou wast all made of youth,
All perfect in thy blowth.

From age to age thou hast remain'd, and thou alone, the world's dear one to be,
O thou of matchless beauty, Urvasi !
Hoar anchorites, their musings broke, upon thy feet the fruit of penance pour ;
'Tis at the shooting of thine eye the threefold world with fickle youth is sore ;
The maddening fragrance flown from thee the zephyr blind doth ever blow around ;
Like honey-drunken humming drone, the poet charm'd, with mind allured, turns round
With chainless music's sound.
With tinkling of toe-trinkets go, thy cloth-hem flowing by,
Like lightning quick to fly.

When, in the council of the Gods, thou dancest round, elate with lofty glee,
O quivering wavering fickle Urvasi,—
At beat on beat there dances up amid the main the billows' crowd in mirth,
With heads of crops a-shivering there trembles up the green hem of the earth,
From out the necklace on thy breast upon the sky the stars do slip and fall,
All on a sudden in the breast of ev'ry male the soul is self-lost all,
Blood dances at the call.
At end of sky thy midmost zone doth break and fall outright,
O thou uncover'd quite!

Upon the sunrise mount of heaven a very Dawn embodied must thou be,
O charmer of the world, fair Urvasi!
With flow of tears the world doth shed is wetted all the slimness of thy form;
With heart-blood of the threefold world are painted all thy ruddy feet full warm;
O thou loose-braided and disrobed, full-blossom'd is the world's desired delight
All like a lotus, in whose midst thou settest down thy lotus-feet so bright,
Whose weight is all too light.
Within the endless heaven of mind thou makest sport for e'er,
O vision's comrade fair!

Out yonder, hark! from sky to sky, both Heaven and Earth are crying out for thee,
O cruel-hearted deaf-soul'd Urvasi!

Will now the primal age antique upon this world return
as heretofore ?—
From out the floorless shoreless deep, with wetted hair,
say, wilt thou rise once more ?
Say, will that earliest form of thine unfold itself upon the
earliest dawn ?
Will ev'ry limb of thine be wet with wounds from eyes of
all the woe-begone,
With tear-drops flowing on ?
And will the mighty main at once with matchless
music's sound
Let all its billows bound ?

'Twill not return, 'twill not return—for ever set that
glory's moon for thee,
O moonset-mountain's dweller, Urvasi !
And so, to-day, on face of earth, along with breath of
festive vernal day,
From someone sever'd long from love a long-drawn sigh,
all mingled, comes this way !
When, on the full moon's sheeny night, the quarters ten
are fill'd with smiles all o'er,
A far-off memory from somewhere doth play a pipe that
saddens evermore,
And showers of tear-drops pour :
Still Hope doth keep awake within the soul's
outcry,
O thou with bands put by !

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—The source of this inimitable artistic conception in Kalidasa's well-known play translated by Wilson under the name of "The Hero and the Nymph." Are you not strongly reminded of Aphroditè ?]

A HYMN TO VENUS.

(*From Sappho*).

O THOU on broider'd throne, immortal Venus,
Daughter of Jove, wile-weaver, I beseech thee,
Not, not with pains, and not with troubles, weigh thou,
O Queen, my spirit;
But hither come, if ever thou aforetime
That voice of mine with heedful ear from far-off
Didst hear, and, having left thy Father's mansions All-golden, camest
With chariot yoked; and thou wast drawn by beauteous
And fleeting sparrows, round the earth all-dusky
A-flapping fast their wings, from utmost heaven Athwart the midmost;
And quickly they arrived; and thou, O blest one,
Thy smile displaying on thy face immortal,
Didst ask, why now again I grieved, and wherefore Again I call'd thee,
And what I most desired, for me to happen,
With madding spirit. "Now again, what Charmer
Wouldst thou lead forth to be thy love? What person, O Sappho, wrongs thee?
"For, even tho' one flies, one soon shall follow,
And, if one takes not gifts, one yet shall give them,
And, if one loves thee not, one soon shall love thee, Howso unwilling."

Come now to me, and loosen me from cruel
Tangle of care, and, whatso to accomplish
My spirit seeks, accomplish; and thyself be
A fellow-fighter.

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—Nothing in literary history is so touching as the picture of "Sappho who broke off a fragment of her soul for us to guess at." The present poem is quoted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus as an example of the style which he calls "smooth and florid." I have not preserved the alternation of consonants and vowels, which is fine in Greek, but which is apt to be cloying in English.]

AN ODE ON THE DEATH OF A SPARROW.

(*From Catullus*).

MOURN, O ye Venuses, and O ye Cupids,
And mourn, as many men as are full charming!
The sparrow is no more of mine own lady,
The sparrow, dear delight of mine own lady,
Whom more than her own eyne she used to cherish:
For, he was fed on mead, and knew his mistress
Herself so well as knows a girl her mother:
Nor would he stir away from out her bosom;
But flitting all about, now hither, now thither,
All to his mistress' self he used to twitter.
He now goes thro' a way all full of darkness
Thither, from whence, they say, no one may come back:
But ill be unto thee, O evil darkness
Of Hell, that eatest up all objects beauteous:
Such beauteous sparrow off from me thou stolest.
O ill hath come to pass! O poor lost sparrow,
'Tis now for thee the eyne of mine own lady
With tears are swollen soft and redden'd, soft eyne!

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—Skelton may emulate Catullus in his "Boke of Phyllyp Sparrowe," but does he come near Catullus? The sly sweet tone of sarcasm is heightened in the original by diminutives, which can be rendered by more than one device in English. Venus' car, it will be remembered, was drawn by sparrows. Cicero mentions four Venuses and three Cupids.]

THE GARMENT OF GOOD LADIES.

(*From Henryson*).

WOULD my good Lady love me best,
And seek to please my mind-
I would a garment goodliest
To fit her body find.

Of honour high should be her hood,
Upon her head to wear,
Equipt with self-control so good,
No blame should injure her.

Her shirt should be on body fixt,
Of chastity so white,
With shame and dread together mixt,
It should be perfect quite.

Her kirtle should be of no taint,
All laced with lawful love ;
The eyelet-holes, of self-restraint,
Which ne'er she should remove.

Her gown should be of goodness fair
Ribbon'd with reputation,
Purfled with pleasure everywhere,
And furr'd with gentle fashion.

Her belt should be of kindliness,
Around her middle set ;
Her mantle, made of humbleness,
To bear both wind and wet.

Her hat should be of carriage fair ;
Her fillet, all of truth;
Her ruff, of goodly thought and rare;
Her throat-ribbon, of ruth.

Her sleeves should be of hopeful mood,
To keep her from despair;
Her gloves, of sweet house-keeping good,
To hide her fingers fair.

Her shoes should be of certainty,
So that she might not slide;
Her hose, I think, of honesty,
I should for her provide.

Would she put on this garment gay,
I by my bliss would swear
That she ne'er wore or green or gray
That deckt her half so fair.

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—This poem alone would justify Tennyson's words: "That dark and true and tender is the North."]

ALCÆUS AND SAPPHO.

(*Alcæus*).

O VIOLET-WEAVING, serene, sweet-smiling Sapphŏ,
I would say something, but shame my speech doth hinder.

(*Sappho*).

And hadst thou longing for what is good or fair,
And not some bad thing to say thy tongue were prone,
Shame had not, then, thine eyes repleted,
But thou hadst spoken about it justly.

July, 1908,

[NOTE.—What a world of poetry is mixed up with this dialogue! It is interesting to note that Alcæus speaks in Sapphics and Sappho replies in Alcaics. As shame hinders the speech of Alcæus, his Sapphics, which by the way are "a majore," are incomplete. I like in the main Mr. Bliss Carman's bold reconstruction of Sappho's fragments, although I cannot always keep pace with the flights of his fancy.]

A SONNET ON LAURA'S MIRROR.

(From Petrarch).

THAT foe of mine, wherein you're wont to see
Your eyes, held dear by Love and Heaven too,
With beauty not its own enamour'd you,
More sweet and glad than mortal form may be
Lady, thro' its advice you've banish'd me
From out my refuge sweet, and out I flew,
A wretched exile! ne'er was I, I knew,
Fit to be there, where you alone sit free.
But were I fixt to be your bosom-mate,
A flattering mirror should not do me wrong,
And make you love yourself, O proud and rude!
Sure, if you call to mind Narcissus' fate,
What a vain end to which you drift along,
Altho' the mead's unfit for flower so good!

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is the true Italian Sonnet.]

A SONNET ON PHYLLIS'S FACE.

(*From Wyatt*).

IF feeble care, and sudden paleness sore,
And sighs with speech full little to complain,
Now joy, now woe, be found my face to stain,
If, for small hope, much fear upon that score
To haste or slack my pace to less or more
Be sign of love,—then do I love again.
If thou ask whom, then since I did refrain
From Brunet, who my wealth did so adore,—
The face unfeign'd of Phyllis has the place
That Brunet had; she has, and ever shall;
She from myself now holds me in her grace;
She holds in sway my mind, my will, and all;
Within my heart full worthy does she stay,
Without whose help I scarcely live a day.

July, 1908.

[Note.—This may be called the Wyattian Sonnet.]

A SONNET ON GERALDINE'S LINEAGE.

(*From Surrey*).

OF Tuscany, my lady's worthy race;
Fair Florence was erewhile her ancient seat;
The Western Isle, whose pleasant shore does face
Wild Cambria's cliffs, did give her life and heat;
Foster'd she was with milk of Irish breast;
Her sire, an earl; her dame, of princes' blood;
From tender years in Britain did she rest,
With child of prince, who tasted costly food.
Hunsdon did make her first before me shine;
Her name is Geraldine; her hue is bright.
Hampton did teach me first to wish her mine;
Windsor, alas! did chase me from her sight.
Her beauty, like her virtues, from above!
Happy is he, that can obtain her love!

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is the true English Sonnet. Call it a "quatorzain" if you like, but "with this key Shakespeare unlocked his heart."]

A SONNET ON ELIZABETH'S NAME.

From Spenser).

ONE day I wrote her name upon the sand,
But came the waves, and wash'd it all away;
Again I wrote it with a second hand,
But came the tide, and made my pains its prey.
"Vain man," said she, "that dost in vain essay
A mortal thing so to immortalise;
For I myself shall seek a like decay,
And wish my name were blotted out likewise.
"Not so," said I; "let baser things devise
To die in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse shall bid your virtues ever rise,
And in the heavens write your glorious name.
And there, when death shall all the world subdue,
Our love shall live, and later life renew.'

July, 1908.

[NOTE.—This may be called the Spenserian Sonnet. Here we have the best sonnet in the whole "Amoretti" of Spenser.]

THE REVELLER.

(From Meleager).

"CAST be the die. Come on, I am off. See, muster up courage."
"Swiller of wine, what's your longing?"
"I'm longing to dance."
"Longing to dance? Where wanders the mind? What reason in Love is?"
"Come on quick. Where's your previous fondness of words?
Throw not away much trouble of wisdom. Only I do know
This, that the spirit of Jove even is master'd by Love."

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—See the reason that there is in Love in Plato's "Symposium": "The lover is godly, because he is inspired by God. If Love be, as he surely is, a godhead, he cannot be evil."]

SIVA AND UMA.

(*From Visakhadatta*).

"WHO the happy one is here
on thy head ?" "Moonbeam it is."
"What ! is that the name she's got ?"

"Tho' the name of such a one
is a very well-known name,
how is it forgot by thee ?"

"Woman, not the Moon, I ask."
"Let her say, let Vijaya,
if the Moon thou trustest not."

He that from the Goddess strives
to conceal the Stream Divine,
guileful Lord, your saviour be.

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—Observe the play on words, and the following allusions :—(1) The River-Goddess Ganga sprang from the matted hair of the God Siva, and was the rival of his wife Uma. (2) Siva had the sixteenth digit of the Moon on his crest, and "Moonbeam" was a possible female name. (3) Vijaya was a handmaid of Uma.]

DREAM-PICTURES.

(*From Heine*).

I ONCE did dream a dream of Love's wild glow,
Of fairy tresses, myrtle, mignonette,
Of cheating lips with bitter redness set,
Of gloomy songs with gloomy music-flow.

Paled, faded are the dreams a long long time,
Faded my dearest picture dream-begot!
There's left me nothing, but what fever hot
I once did pour into pathetic rime.

Thou, waif of song, art left. Now fade and die,
And seek that dream-made form long vanish'd quite,
And say for me, if thou dost leap to light,—
That airy shade I greet with airy sigh.

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—Heine is so fine in all his lyrics that I am not quite sure why I chose this instead of any other.]

THE LAKE.

(*From Lamartine*).

THUS always hurried forth to new and newer clime,
Into eternal night borne once for all away,
Can we not evermore upon the sea of Time
Cast anchor for a day ?

O lake ! the year hath scarce completed its career,
And by the cherish'd flood she should have seen anew,
Behold ! I come alone to take this stone-seat where
She sat before thy view !

Thus didst thou make a roar beneath these rocky caves ;
Thus didst thou break thyself their riven sides to meet ;
Thus did the wind fling out the foam of all thy waves
Upon her well-loved feet.

One eve—remember'st thou ?—in silence we did rove ;
We only heard afar, on wave and 'neath the skies,
The noise of rowing men who all in cadence clove
Thy flood's harmonious rise.

All on a sudden, tones the earth did never hear,
Upon the charmèd shore, did cleave the echoes all :
The flood did list with heed ; the voice I hold most dear,
Did let these accents fall :

" O Time ! delay thy flight ; and ye, propitious Hours,
Your onward speed delay ;
And let us fully taste the quick delight that's ours
In life's most beauteous day !

" Unhappy folk enow beseech you here below,
Flow, flow to give them rest ;
Take with their days away their inward-eating woe ;
Forget to touch the blest.

"But I do ask in vain for some more moments' time:
Time scapes me in his flight;
I say unto this night: Be slower; and the prime
Of day dispels the night.

"Then let us, let us love! the hour that flies before
Let us enjoy anon!
For man no haven is, for Time there is no shore;
He flows, and we pass on!"

O jealous Time, can now these moments of delight,
When love in mighty flood doth pour us happiness,
Fly far away from us with that same speedy flight
As days of deep distress?

Ah what! can we not, then, preserve at least their trace?
What! gone for evermore! what! wholly lost for e'er!
Time gave them unto us, Time doth them all efface,
He will return them ne'er!

The ever, nothingness, the past, dark gulfs of time,
What do ye with the days your greedy maws conceal?
Will ye return us, speak, those extasies sublime
Which from our grasp ye steal?

O lake! O silent rocks! O caves! O forest deep!
O ye whom Time doth spare or may with youth renew,
Keep ever of that night, O beauteous Nature, keep,
At least the memory due!

Let it be in thy calm, let it be in thy storms,
Fair lake, and in the face of all thy laughing shore,
And in these fir-trees dark, and in these rocks' wild forms
Which hang thy waters o'er!

Let it be in the breeze that shivers in its flight,
In noises of thy shores that thine own shores repeat,
And in the white-brow'd star that makes thy surface white
With radiance soft and sweet!

And let the wind that moans, and let the reed that sighs,
And let the odours light thy balmy air doth move,
And let all things with ears or breathing nose or eyes,
All say this: They did love!

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is worth all the other poems of Lamartine put together.]

THE WEIRD WHEEL OF SIMÆTHA.

(*From Theocritus*).

WHERE are the bays? bring them to me, Thestylis; where are the love-charms?
Make garlands for the bowl with the bright-red blossom of sheep-wool,
So I may bind with a spell my beloved man causing me trouble;
He, for the last twelve days, oh cruel, hath never been hither;
Nor is he ware, if I now were dead, or if yet I am living;
Nor hath he knock'd at my door, spiteful! Elsewhither then, are they
Flown off, Love with his light instinct and the Goddess of Longing?
Going my way I'll seek Timagetus' college of wrestling
There on the morrow to see him and tax him with wrongs he is doing.
Now will I bind him with spell of my charms. But, Luna of Heaven,
Shine out fair, for to thee I will sing forth, Spirit of Stillness,
Eke to the Goddess of Hell, as the young whelps shiver before her,
While she fareth athwart deep barrows of corpses and dark gore.
Hail, dread Goddess of Hell, to the end give unto us succour,
Make this nostrum of mine no weaker than nostrum of Circè,
Or of Medea, or else of the auburn-hair'd Perimedè.
Turn, weird wheel, drag home to myself yon man whom I cherish.

Barley is first in the fire smoulder'd : nay, scatter it over,
Thestylis. Ah thou maiden accurst, where wander thy fancies ?
Even of thee, loathsome as I am, have I come to be laugh'd at ?
Scatter, and mutter the while thus : " Bones of thy Delphis I scatter."
Turn, weird wheel, drag home to myself yon man whom I cherish.

[NOTE.—This is the finest thing I know in Theocritus ; it is better than the dialogue between Gorgo and Praxinoë. Observe the beauty of the refrain. Vergil's model was Theocritus.]

THE PLAINT OF CORYDON.

(*From Vergil*).

CORYDON, young shepherd, cherish'd well-shapen Alexis,
Joy of his lord; nor could he attain to the object he hoped for.
Only among thick beechen, with tops surrounded by shadows,
Care in his bosom, he came; there, lone, these verses unpolish'd
Unto the hills and the woods with a fruitless trouble he hurl'd forth:
"Ah, hard-hearted Alexis, my pipings nothing thou reckest?
Hast no pity on me? me at last thou forcest to perish!
Just now even the cattle betake them to shadows and coolness;
Just now even the green lizards lie hidden in briars;
Thestylis also, for reapers at noonday rapidly worn-out,
Doth bruise garlic and thyme, wild herbs, till they render their fragrance;
But, all harsh by my side, as I heedfully follow thy footsteps,
Under the hot noonday, crickets keep droning in copses.
Was't not rather enough, Amaryllis' sorrowful anger,
Eke her superb coldness, to have suffer'd? suffer'd Menalcas,
Tho' he was dusky of body, and tho' bright-beaming thy colour?
Ah, thou youth well-shaped, be not too trustful of beauty.
White as they are, withbinds fall; dark, blackberries are gather'd.

Hated I am, nor of me and my state thou askest, Alexis;
How rich I'm in my flocks, how flowing with plenty of bright milk.
One thousand are my ewes, that rove in Sicilian mountains;
Fresh milk, neither in summer, nor winter, is unto me wanting."

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—Byron was very fond of this eclogue. Vergil's model was Theocritus.]

THE WEIRD HERB OF INDRANI.

(*From Indrani*).

HERE, from the earth I dig a herb,
A plant of most effectual strength,
Wherewith one quells the rival wife,
Wherewith one gains oneself the lord.

With leaves outspread, auspicious plant
Sent by the Gods, victorious,
Blow me the rival wife away,
And make my lord be mine alone.

Higher am I, O highest plant,
Yea, higher than the highest ones;
Now she who is my rival wife,
Is lower than the lowest ones.

Her very name I utter not;
She takes no pleasure in this man;
Far off unto the farthest place
We cause the rival wife to go.

I am with power victorious,
And now a fellow-victor thou;
We both, victorious become,
Will vanquish now the rival wife.

Thee have I gain'd for vanquisher,
Thee have I grasp'd with stronger spell;
To meward let thy spirit speed,
As to the calf the cow doth run;
Like downward water, let it run.

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—Leaving out Rajasa, who was a sort of Sappho run mad, and one or two other obscure poetesses, Indrani is the first great Indo-European poetess on record. Does she not remind you of Theocritus?]

AGASTYA AND LOPAMUDRA.

(From the Rigveda).

(LOPAMUDRA).

FOR many autumns have I been a-toiling,
By night and morn, thro' dawns that find us aged;
Impair'd by age is beauty of our bodies:
Still unto wives should they that breed go forward.

For even they who erst were law-fulfillers,
Who jointly with the Gods the law did utter,
They did decide, but they the end attain'd not:
Still unto wives should they that breed go forward.

(AGASTYA).

Not false the toil, to which the Gods show favour;
All those who vie for envy, let us vanquish.
Here let us win the hundred-crafted battle,
Which, met as spouses, we may wage together.

(LOPAMUDRA).

Love for the pressing sage is come upon me,
Sprung hence or thence or from somewhere I know not.

(Dame Lopamudra leadeth him that breedeth;
Him, wise, the dame unwise receiveth panting.)

(AGASTYA).

This Soma I address, which is anear us,
Which hath within the inmost heart been drunken;
What sins we have committed, let it pardon:
Insooth, full many longings hath a mortal.

(Agastya, ploughing for himself with ploughshares,
Of children, progeny and power desirous,
Did foster, sage of mighty strength, both classes:
True blessings, at the hands of Gods, he came by.)

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is the earliest specimen I know of a dramatic dialogue in any Aryan language. The sentiment in it is the most primitive of all human sentiments, There is food for thought here for psychologists of the Herbert Spencer type, for moralists of the Duprat type, and for anthropologists of the Tylor type.]

PURURAVAS AND URVASI.

(From the Rigveda).

(PURURAVAS).

HO there, my wife! do stay, thou haughty-minded!
A gentle parley let us have together.
Ne'er have these thoughts of ours, as yet unspoken,
Produced us happiness in days now far-off.

(URVASI).

What may this utterance of thine avail me?
Away I glode, as glides the first of Dawnings.
O Pururavas! go again to homeward:
As hard to catch the wind, so 'tis to catch me.

(PURURAVAS).

(Referring to the occasion of their parting).

Like arrow sent for glory from the quiver,
Like courser winning cattle, winning hundreds,
On strength unmanly seem'd to fall a lightning:
Like lambs, of crying out did think the minstrels.

(Referring to her past favours).

She, fetching wealth and life to her lord's father,
At break of dawn, from out the nearest dwelling
Would reach the home wherein she took her pleasure,
By day and night made weary with caresses.

(URVASI).

Thrice daily didst thou tire me with caresses,
And, all to my displeasure, try to sate me;
O Pururavas, to thy wish I yielded:
So wast thou king, O hero, of my body.

(PURURAVAS).

Referring to the Nymphs discovered by lightning).

Sujurni, Sreni too, and Sumne-api,
And Hradechakshus, Granthini, Charanyu,—
These Maids, like ruddy kine, did hasten forward;
For glory, like to milch-cows, they did bellow.

(URVASI).

(Referring to her unborn son).

While he was first conceived, the Dames were seated;
And he was nurtured by the Rivers freely;
When, Pururavas, thou for mighty battle
Wast nurtured by the Gods to slay the Dasyus.

(PURURAVAS).

(Referring to the Nymphs who tempted him).

When I these Maids, who laid aside their raiment,
Immortals they, myself a mortal, courted,
Away from me they fled like frighten'd serpents,
They shook with fear like steeds that touch a chariot.

(URVASI).

When these Immortal Ones a mortal loveth,
And with these Nymphs, as far he can, hath converse,
They, like to swans, display their bodies' beauty,
And, like to steeds at play, they go a-nibbling.

(PURURAVAS).

(Referring to her past favours and her unborn son).

She, who like falling lightning flash'd forth brilliant,
Did bring me from the waters grateful presents.
From out the flood be born a strong young hero!
May Urvasi prolong his life for ever!

(URVASI).

(*Aside*). So wast thou born to drink the milk of heifers !
(*Aloud*). Thou gavest me this vigour, Pururavas.
(*Referring to his broken promise*).
I warn'd thee, knowing it, that day : thou wouldst not
Hear me : what sayest thou, when naught avails thee ?

(PURURAVAS).

(*Referring to the guardianship of the unborn son*).
When will the son be born and seek his father ?
Like mourner, will he weep when this he knoweth ?
(*Imploring her again to return*).
Who may divide the man and wife accordant,
While fire is shining with thy husband's parents ?

(URVASI).

I will console him when his tears he sheddeth :
Like mourner, he shall mourn for care that blesses.
Forth will I send thee what is thine between us.
Away, go home, thou fool : thou hast not won me.

(PURURAVAS).

Thy devotee shall fly this day for ever,
Unto the farthest place to go afar-off :
Then let him lie upon Destruction's bosom,
Thereafter let rapacious wolves devour him.

(URVASI).

O Pururavas, do not die, nor vanish :
Let not the evil-omen'd wolves assail thee.
There cannot be with women lasting friendship :
Hyenas' hearts are but the hearts of women.

When in an alter'd shape with men I wander'd,
And pass'd the nights thro' autumns four among them,
A drop of butter once a day I tasted;
And now, with even that content, I wander

(PURURAVAS).

Who fills the air and measures out the region,
That Urvasi I call, her best beloved:
Let now the gift of pious rite approach thee:
Turn thou to me again: my heart is burning.

(URVASI).

Thus unto thee the Gods here speak, O Eila:
"Since verily thou art by death befriended,
Thy sons shall serve the Gods with their oblations;
In heaven, even thou shalt have rejoicings."

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is the oldest Indo-European love-story, and has been immortalised by Kalidasa in his well-known play translated by Wilson under the name of "The Hero and the Nymph." Remember Robert Browning's words:—

"Escape me?
Never—
Beloved!
While I am I, and you are you,
So long as the world contains us both,
Me the loving and you the loath,
While the one eludes must the other pursue."]

YAMA AND YAMI.

(From the Rigveda).

(YAMI).

OH, might I turn my friend to loving friendship!
So, coming thro' the ample airy ocean,
Unto the father may the sage get offspring,
As on the earth full long a space he museth.

(YAMA).

Thy friend doth not desire this loving friendship,
By which a kindred may become a stranger:
The mighty living Deity's sons, the heroes,
Supporters of the heavens, see far around them.

(YAMI).

Desired of thee by Gods immortal this is,—
Yea, offspring of the sole existing mortal;
O may thy spirit rest upon my spirit;
Lord of thy wife, mayst thou possess her body.

(YAMA).

What ne'er we did erewhile! What is it, surely?
The law we speak, and may we do the lawless?
Gandharva in the floods, the Dame of Waters—
Such is our bond, such is our highest kinship.

(YAMI).

Sure, in the womb the Maker made us consorts,
God Tvashtri, bringer back of life, all-shaper:
No one doth violate his laws unchanging:
'Tis known that we are his, to Earth and Heaven.

(YAMA).

Who knoweth of that day, the very foremost ?
Who hath beheld it ? Who can here declare it ?
Supreme is Mitra's and Varuna's statute :
What wilt thou say, O maid, that men be tempted ?

(YAMI).

Love bred by Yama came upon me, Yami,
That we on self-same couch might lie together :
I, wife-like, to my lord would yield my body,
And we shall roll along like wheels of chariots.

(YAMA).

They stand not still, they never close their eyelids,
Those watchmen of the Gods who near us wander :
With someone else than me, O maid, go quickly,
And with him roll along like wheels of chariots.

(YAMI).

May nights to him, and also days, be granted
By Surya's eye, and may it shine forth ever.
In heaven and earth be there a kindred couple :
May Yami suffer Yama's act unkinlike.

(YAMA).

Full surely there will come succeeding ages,
When kindred folk will do the act unkinlike !
Stretch pillow-like thine arm for him who breedeth ;
Seek someone else than me, O fair, for husband.

(YAMI).

What is a brother, when there is no husband ?
What is a sister, when Destruction cometh ?
O'ercome by Love, these many words I utter :
Together with my body blend thy body.

(YAMA).

I will not with thy body blend my body:
They call it sin when one comes near his sister:
With someone else than me prepare thy pleasures:
Of thee thy brother, fair, doth not desire this.

(YAMI).

Full weak, alas! thou art, O Yama, surely:
No spirit and no heart we find within thee!
Another will entwine thee like a girdle,
And clasp thee round, as round a tree the creeper.

(YAMA).

Clasp thou another, Yami, and another
Will clasp thee round, as round a tree the creeper
His spirit do thou seek, and he thy spirit;
Thereafter form with him a blest alliance.

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—In this hymn the morality of the early Indian rejects the very old Indo-Iranian myth of the descent of mankind from primeval twins, who should be likened to the Semitic Adam and Eve. Whether it was due to biological reasons or not, I do not know. Are you not reminded of Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis"?]

AMALIA.

(From Schiller).

FAIR as an angel from Walhalla's halls,
Fair in midst of all the youths was he,
Heavenly and mild his look, as Maybeam falls,
Caught within the azure glass-like sea.

His kisses—like to Eden felt all gay!
Like two flames together driven, like
Harp-tones that on each other seem to play
With the heaven-born melody they strike—

Rush'd, flew, mix'd sprite and sprite together sent,
Lips and cheeks did burn and palpitate,
Soul ran to soul—and heaven and earth were blent
As dissolved around the lovèd mate.

He is away—in vain, alas! in vain
Groans he now, and fearful sighs doth pass!
He is away, and all life's bliss inane
Melts away in one forlorn Alas!

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—The spiritual side of Love cannot be better represented. Tennyson is about as happy in his line: "Star to star vibrates light; may soul to soul," etc.]

RODRIGUE.

(*From Corneille*).

STRUCK to the bottom of my core
By unexpected dint and all too deadly thrust,
Prone sadly to avenge a cause of quarrel just,
And left a hapless prey to might unjust and sore,
I linger motionless; my soul, cast down and broke,
Yields to the killing stroke.
So near to find my longing's recompense,
O God, the sudden pain!
In this affront my father took offence,
The offender is the father of Chimène!

What strife I feel, what rude alarm!
Against mine honour true my love is now inclined.
I must avenge a sire, and lose a sweetheart kind.
The one doth stir my heart, the other holds mine arm.
Reduced to this sad choice—to violate my flame
Or live in bitter shame—
On either side my woe is infinite.
O God, the sudden pain!
Must I an insult brook and not requite?
Must I assail the father of Chimène?

My sire, my sweetheart, honour, love,
Noble and hard constraint, rude bondage held so dear,
My pleasures all are dead, my glory sullied here.
The one doth bring me woe, the other shame doth prove.

O dear and cruel hope of soul on honour bent,
But eke on love intent,
O worthy foe of my best happiness,
Sword causing me my pain,
Art thou employ'd mine honour to redress ?
Art thou employ'd to lose me my Chimène ?

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—This extract alone would justify the expression: "le grand Corneille."]

HERMIONE.

(From Racine).

WHERE am I? What did I? What must I do again?
What rapture seizes me! What spirit-gnawing pain?
Aimless, and wandering, athwart these halls my gait!
Alas! can I not know, whether I love or hate?
Cruel! with what a look he left me all alone!
No pity, no regret, outward at least, was shown!
Him did I see wax kind, one moment feel deprest?
And from him could I draw a single sob comprest?
All dumb amid my sighs, all still amid my fears,
Did he but seem at least to share with me my tears?
And I lament him yet! and, all my woe to fill,
My heart, my wearied heart, takes pleasure in him still!
I tremble but to think the blow for him design'd,
And, ready to revenge, I'm ready to be kind!
No, let me not recall mine anger's verdict sore:
O let him die! because he lives for me no more.
The traitor now exults, and at my passion jeers:
He thinks he'll see this storm soon melt away in tears;
He trusts that, always weak, and with a heart that quakes,
I'll parry with one arm the blow the other makes.
He judges still of me by goodness in the past.
But nay, the traitor now hath thoughts of other cast.
Exulting in the shrine, he takes no thought or care,
If one desires his life or else his death elsewhere.
He leaves me, thankless man, amid this struggle dark.
No, no, let once again Orestes do his work.

O let him die, since he must have forseen the blow,
And since he forced me now at last to wish it so. . . .
To wish it so ? Ah what ! do I then wish it done ?
Shall then his death be caused by love of Hermione ?

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—Does not Racine approach Shakespeare in the art of probing a woman's soul ? The classical French alexandrine is worth careful study, as it led Dryden to develop the heroic couplet, which can be traced to Waller, but which is to be distinguished from Chaucer's rimed decasyllabic verse and Shelley's "rimed blank verse."]

THE SONG OF MONSIEUR JOURDAIN.

(*From Molière*).

I THOUGHT my wee bit Jean
As sweet as fair of body;
I thought my wee bit Jean
As sweet as lamb is seen.
Oh! Oh! she is a hundredfold,
A thousandfold more bloody
Than tiger in a wold.

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is in the peculiar comic vein of Molière.]

THE SONG OF DON CARDENIO

(*From Cervantes*).

WHAT causes all my weal to wane ?
Disdain.
And what doth wax my misery ?
Jealousy.
And what is to my patience trying ?
'Tis Flying.
So that for all my pain and crying
There can be found no remedy,
Since these extinguish Hope in me—
Disdain and Jealousy and Flying.

What cause to me this grief doth prove ?
'Tis Love.
And what withstands my pride with hate ?
Cruel Fate.
And what my misery hath given ?
'Tis Heaven.
So that thro' jealous fears I'm driven
To die of this peculiar ill,
Since these unite to pain me still—
My Love and cruel Fate and Heaven.

What will repair my health full well ?
Death's Spell.
And what in Love doth find the good ?
Fickle Mood.
And what doth heal its evil wholly ?
'Tis Folly.

So that it is no wisdom, solely
To seek to 'heal the wild disease,
When I can have the remedies—
Death's Spell and Fickle Mood and Folly.

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is one of the typical songs in that typical work of Cervantes, "Don Quixote."]

FABULLA.

(*From Martial*).

FULL fair thou art : I know. And maiden : truly.
And wealthy : who indeed can e'er deny it ?
But while thyself too much, Fabulla, praisest,
Nor wealthy, nor full fair, nor art thou maiden.

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is the one epigram of Martial's that I care for most.]

THYRSIS.

(*From Theocritus*).

AH, hapless Thyrsis! what dost thou profit by moaning
Till both thine eyne are wetted and fretted with tears?
Gone is the kid, that fair youngling, gone to the hell-shades;
Truly, the jaws of the wolf, savage, have fasten'd on her.
Now do the hounds keep baying; but what is the gain, when of that one
Nor bone nor cinder, gone as she now is, is left?

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—Ah! the sad sweet tone.]

THE PENANCE OF UMA.

(From Kalidasa).

SHE past great Indra and the rest with fortunes fair,
The lords of all the quarters four, in proud disdain;
Tho' beauty wins not him who crush'd down Love for e'er,
The Pinak-bearer for her lord she longs to gain.

A yell unbearable did turn away, of yore,
From Pura's Foe the failing head of Kama's dart:
Her inmost heart by falling off the aim it tore,
Tho' flower-arm'd Kama's form was wither'd ev'ry part.

Since then, within her father's home, on Love intent,
The sandal-paste on forehead making gray her hair,
Never the maiden would attain her full content,
Tho' sheets of crusted snow to lie upon were there.

When she began to tell the Pinak-bearer's deeds
With words that slipt from throat for tear-drops flowing on,
Full oft the princesses of folk with heads of steeds,
Companions of her woodland song, she caused to moan.

When but a third remain'd of night, then momently
She closed her eyes, but sat up all at once awake;
"Whither, O Blue-neck'd, goest thou?"—thus vacantly,
Her arms enwound about a neck supposed, she spake.

"Since wise men call thee immanent in ev'ry mind,
Why art thou not aware I am in love with thee?"
Thus, fondly with her own artistic hand outlined,
The God moon-crested was upbraided secretly.

And when, to gain the Lord of all the world as lord,
No other way she could devise in thoughtful mood,
Then, close by us attended, at her father's word,
She came to make her penance in this penance-wood.

On trees, which with her hand our maiden friend did set,
The witnesses of all her penance, fruit is seen;
Not even on the way to bud appeareth yet
Her longing for the God with crest of lunar sheen.

I wot not when that long-sought one so hard to find,
While friends behold her form with tear-drops shed in vain,
While she is penance-worn, will to our friend be kind,
Like Indra to the furrow worn for lack of rain

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is from the epic called "The Birth of the War-God," one of the most juvenile efforts of Kalidasa, who was then but a strong-winded Anacreon. There is a free metrical version of it by Griffith.]

A LOVE-LETTER ON A LOTUS-LEAF.

(*From Kalidasa*).

THY heart to me is all unknown!
Mine, however, Kama, daily, nightly burning,
—Thou unpiteous!—hurries strongly on:
Right in thee my limbs have placed their inward yearning.

[NOTE.—This is taken from my translation of Kalidasa's "Sakuntala and her Keepsake." There is a reference to this love-letter in Michael Dutt's "Epistle from Sakuntala to Dushyanta."]

A LOVE-LETTER IN RUNES.

LO! to beg thee bade he who this beam did crave:
O thou gem-deckèd, do remember
In thy wit-chamber word-promises,
That ye in days gone-by oft did give out,
While ye might do, in mead-castles:
"Buildings build we, on land bide we,
Frame we friendship." Him force did drive
From the bold country: he bade me now
Earnestly urge thee to come o'er oceans,
When thou wouldst hearken, on hill-summits,
Mournfully calling, cuckoos in woodlands.

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—This reminds me of the last stanza of Shelley's "Invocation":

"I love Love—though he has wings,
And like light can flee,
But above all other things,
Spirit, I love thee—
Thou art love and life! O come!
Make once more my heart thy home!"]

THE DAMES OF THE OLDEN TIME.

(From Villon).

SAY where, or in what land, say ye,
Is Flora, that fair Roman dame;
Hipparchia, or Thais, she
Whose lineage was with hers the same;
Echo, who spake when voices came
Beyond a river or a lake,
Whose beauty pass'd the human frame?—
But where are last year's snows awake?

Where's Hélois, wise as wise could be,
For whom, in bonds, turn'd monk for shame
Pierre Abelard at Dennis'?—he
For love such troubles sore did claim!
Likewise, where is that queen of fame,
Who caused poor Buridan to take
The Seine, cast in a sack for game?—
But where are last year's snows awake?

Queen Blanche, like lily fair to see,
Who had for voice serene her name;
Berthe, Beatrice, and Alice free;
And Hermengard, whose rule did tame
The Maine; and Jean Darc, cast aflame
At Rouen in the English stake;
Where are they, Virgin free from blame?—
But where are last year's snows awake?

ENVOY.

Prince, ask not what of them became
In week or year, no queries make,
So thou mayst not like me exclaim:
But where are last year's snows awake?

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—If you would know more of Villon, read the Second Series of Swinburne's "Poems and Ballads." D. G. Rossetti's rendering of this ballad is very good, but it does not show the construction of the metre.]

SAINT EULALIA.

A GOOD young maiden was Eulalia;
Her body fair, her soul still fairer was.
To conquer her did wish God's enemies;
They wish'd to make her serve the Devil's will.
She heard not those who gave her bad advice
God to deny, Who high in heaven abides.
For neither gold, nor silver, nor array,
Nor threats of kings, nor flattering words of prayer,
Nothing could ever bend her to this view:
The maid should cease to love God's service due.
For this they brought her to Maximian,
Who in those days was king o'er pagan men.
He coaxes her, what she doth never like,
That she may put the name of Christian by.
She gathers all from that her secret strength;
She rather would sustain impediments
Than ever lose her sweet virginity;
For that she died in mighty modesty
They cast her in the fire, to burn her quick;
No sins she had, for that she burnt nowhit.
But this converted not the pagan lord;
He bade her head be with a sword cut off.
The damsel ne'er this sentence did gainsay,
Content to leave the world if Christ ordain'd.
In figure of a dove to heaven she scaped.
All pray that she for us may deign to pray,
That unto us His mercy Christ may show
After our death, and let us to Him go
Thro' His own mighty kindness.

August, 1908.

[NOTE.—Here the assonance runs only in couplets; contrast the laisse of a "Chanson de Geste." The faith depicted in the poem is simple, but charming.]

A SONG OF SPRING.

(From the Lady of Vilanova).

WHEN Spring hath driv'n away the clouds and showers,
And when it holds the flowering month of May
You open unto many poets gay
With joyous sense the all too pleasant flowers.

O Queen of Love, O Kindness full of might,
To you I call to find me gentle rest,
So I, with words to you in praise addrest,
Shall have the Flower that owes you birth and light.

Beneath a hallow'd Maiden's raiment neat
The Flower is born to save us with its smell,
The dulcet Flower, which, being tended well,
Will bring us peace that seems so very sweet.

To kiss the Flower, the spring of nobleness,
Will always be my highest longing here;
And, if it may turn meward Heaven's ear,
The rudeness of my sin it will redress.

Mother of Christ, who above all are pure,
Give, if you please, the power of being good:
Drive far from us the mighty Serpent rude,
And show the way that leads to right full sure.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—I like the metaphor of the "Flower" applied to the Prince of Peace. We can give a new meaning to Shelley's line "Flowers are lovely: Love is flower-like."

JUPITER.

(From Archilochus)

O JOVE, O Sire Jove, thine the mighty realm of heaven,
Thou lookest down upon mankind's
Audacious manners, and to thee the savage brute's
Just insolence is eke a care.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is one of the finest hymns in Greek. The conception of Jove here is a moral one, the story of his numerous amours being quite out of keeping with it; consult Fairbanks' "Mythology of Greece and Rome." Archilochus is said to have been the inventor of iambic verse.

AHURA MAZDA.

(*From Zoroaster*).

THIS will I ask thee, tell me right, Ahura!
Who was the Maker, Sire of law, the foremost?
Who for the Suns and Stars did make the orbit?
Whence does the Moon increase and wane except thee?
These things, O Mazda, would I know, and others.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—The "Asura" of the Rigveda and the "Ahura" of the Avesta are the same word, meaning "God." The distinction in Classical Sanskrit between a "Sura" (a God) and an "Asura" (a foe of the Gods) is unhistorical.]

THE BUDDHA.

(*From Gotami*).

O BUDDHA great, I bow to thee, the best of all things living thou,
For thou from woe releasest me, and also other folk enow.

All kinds of woe I've known and met, my thirst for cause is dried up quite,
The path with eightfold foes beset hath been for me with hindrance dight.

Son, mother, father, brother too, and sister, in the town they were;
Not knowing things in manner true, a worldly woman was I e'er.

Seen have I now that Lord of Might, my final hope of succour he.
The world of births is shatter'd quite, there is no more rebirth for me.

He who his prowess did unfold, whose might is fixt for evermore,
That perfect little child behold: lo! here the Buddha I adore.

Ha! 'twas for many beings' sake, of Maya Gotama was sprung;
Whom malady and death did take, their lead of woe away he flung.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—The Buddha is to the Buddhist almost what the Christ is to the Christian. He was the Aryan founder of a world-religion, rejected by his own people, but accepted by a great part of non-Aryan Asia, which even to-day outnumbers the Christian world. Three of his main doctrines were transmigration of souls through worldliness, love towards all beings, and extinction of bodily existence through contemplation and sinless life. He lived about 500 B.C.]

PRAJAPATI.

(*From the Rigveda*).

THE Germ of Gold was at the first in being,
Of all existence born the only Master;
He did support the Earth and eke this Heaven.
What God with our oblation shall we worship?

Who gave us breath and vigour; whose commandments
All creatures ever hearken; whose the Gods are;
Whose shade is Deathlessness; whose servant Death is.
What God with our oblation shall we worship?

Who, of the world that breathes and blinks, by prowess
Became Sole King, yea, of the world that moveth;
Who ruleth over men and over cattle.
What God with our oblation shall we worship?

Whose all these snowy mountains are by prowess;
Whose all the sea is said to be, and rivers;
Whose all these ends of sky; whose both the arms are.
What God with our oblation shall we worship?

By whom the Heavens are strong and Earth is stedfast;
By whom light's realm is fixt; by whom the sky-vault;
Who in the mid-air measured out the regions.
What God with our oblation shall we worship?

To whom the Heaven and Earth, by might establish'd,
Lookt forward, in their inmost spirit trembling;
In whom sustain'd, the Sun doth rise and shine forth.
What God with our oblation shall we worship?

What time the mighty Waters came, containing
All kinds of germ, and giving birth to Agni,
Then was the Gods' One Vital Soul in being.
What God with our oblation shall we worship?

Who in his prowess did survey the Waters,
Containing Daksha, giving birth to Yajna;
Who was among the Gods the Only Godhead.
What God with our oblation shall we worship?

May he not harm us, who is Earth's begetter,
And who begat with soothfast law the Heavens,
And who begat the pleasant mighty Waters.
What God with our oblation shall we worship?

O Lord of all that lives! no one beside thee
All these created things hath comprehended;
With what desire we worship, be that granted;
May we become the lords of mighty treasure.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Is this monotheism or henotheism? The hymn has been translated by Muir, Max Müller, Wallis, Peterson, Scherman, Griffith and others. What God—There is an interesting discussion of this phrase in Macdonell's "History of Sanskrit Literature."]

THE WORLD-SONG.

(*From Roby Tagore*).

ON Thy mighty throne in session,
Thou dost hearken, Sire of All, O,
In the measures of Thy moulding,
Mighty world-song rise and fall, O.
Earthy, unto earth a-clinging,
With this puny throat a-ringing,
Even I unto Thy portals
Am arrived and on Thee call, O.
Nothing do I look for, Father,
'Tis Thy sight alone I strive for,
I shall sing for Thee to hearken,
This is what I here arrive for.
Where the sun and moon are singing,
To that synod upward winging,
Seeks to sing in secret corner
This Thy loyal-hearted thrall, O.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Probably the poet was inspired by the Greek conception of the "music of the spheres," which we find in Shakespeare's lines:

"There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins."]

THE CLOUD-ENVOY.

(From Kalidasa)

A YOUTH was torn
full sadly from his wife,
for his task he had beguiled,
And lost his might
by vengeance, to be brook'd
for a year, his lord did wreak:
A Yaksha he:
he made, where streams are pure
thro' the bath of Janak's child,
Where trees are fresh
with shadows, his abode
in the shrines on Rama's peak.
There, on that hill,
from tender-bosom'd wife
separated, lover proud,
He pass'd some months,
his wrist now left all bare
by the golden armlet flown:
On foremost day
of Ashadh, he beheld,
clinging to the knoll, a cloud,
Which did appear
like sportive elephant,
butting on an earthwork, prone.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—"The Cloud-Envoy," of which the opening verses are given here, is by far the finest lyric in Sanskrit literature. Wilson's translation in heroic couplets gives one no idea of the rhythm of the original.]

A SCENE IN THE DECCAN.

(From Bhavabhuti)

IN rustling bowery cottages a row of owls
hoot from out the young bamboo,
Whose stump's full splendour renders mute the race of rooks
on this Krounchavata knoll;
Here peacocks fond of moving move and move about;
quailing at their scream and coo,
Coil'd round the branches of the aged sandal-tree,
pot-nosed serpents upward roll.
These, in whose caverns mutter sputteringly the waves
of the swift Godavari,
Whose azure peaks are crested all with resting clouds,
are those Southern Mountains steep;
With plashing roar of billows rolling with a dash
on each other rapidly,
All turbulent, are here those meetings of the streams,
hallow'd, and with waters deep.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—I know of no Aryan poet who beats Bhavabhuti in echoing the sublime sounds of Nature. The present extract is from the play called "The Later Life of Rama," which has been translated by Wilson and by Tawney.]

THE WOOD-NYMPH.

(*From Devamuni*).

O NYMPH of Woods! O Nymph of Woods!
O thou that seemest lost to view,
Why dost thou not the village seek?
No fear on thee doth seem to come!

When to the shrill cicala's voice
Replies the swelling cricket's cry,
As tho' with tinkling bells she runs,
The Nymph of Woods doth win her praise.

And cattle seem to feed on grass,
And something like a house is seen,
And then the Nymph of Woods at eve
Doth seem to free the little wains.

Here one is calling to his cow,
Another there hath fell'd a tree,
The dweller in the woods at eve
Doth fancy he hath heard a cry.

The Nymph of Woods doth never slay,
Unless another goes to her:
When she hath eaten of sweet fruit,
At her own will she goes to rest.

Smelling of balm, and sweet of scent,
Replete with food, yet tilling not,
The mother of the deer I've praised,
The Nymph of Woods with praise I've called.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is almost Greek!]

THE CALM OF NATURE.

(From Alcman).

SLUMBER-DROWN'D are the tops of the hills, and eke the gorges,
Jutting capes, and eke the torrents;
Leaves, and creatures that creep, are asleep athwart the dark earth;
Wild deer that dwell in woods, eke the bees that wander,
Sea-beasts as well, whose home is breast of purple sea;
Slumber-drown'd seem birds too,
Grouping with wings in repose.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Surely nothing can beat this "most sleepy piece." The last two lines remind one of another lyric, where Alcman, unable to keep up with his choir of Spartan maidens, wishes he were an old ceryl, so that the female halcyons may carry him on their wings. He was so fond of calm! There is a passage in Tennyson's "In Memoriam," where a pathetic fallacy is produced by the calm of Nature.

AN EASTERN SCENE.

(*From Hugo*).

WALL, town,
Port steep,
Death's own
Dark keep,
Gray seas
Where is
Slow breeze,
All sleep.

September, 1908.

*[NOTE.—Compare Wordsworth:
"Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!"]

THE CRAB AND THE SNAKE.

(*From a Greek skolion*).

THE Crab in this way he spake,
As fairly the Snake he seized:
"Straightforward a companion must be,
Must never have crooked thoughts.'

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—What a fine nursery song! Compare Blake's "Songs of Innocence."]

BABY AND NURSE.

(*From a Quotation by Athenæus*).

"WHERE are my roses, and where are my pansies, and beautiful parsley?"
"Here are thy roses, and here are thy pansies, and beautiful parsley."

September, 1908

[NOTE.—How much a simple thought in simple language can tell!]

THE FUNNY MAN.

(*From Anacreon*).

I LOVE indeed, and do not love;
And I am mad, and am not mad.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This reflects the self-conflict that comes through satiety. It is said of Anacreon that, after a long life wasted between women and wine, he choked himself with a grape stone and died.]

THE DREAMY MAN.

From a Greek skolion).

WOULD that I were a gem serene wrought in the
richest gold,
Would that a lovely woman could carry and
keep me on spotless heart;

September, 1908.

[NOTE—There is poetry in this dreamy fancy. I know of similar sentiments in Indian poetry.]

THE MERRY MAN.

(From Stesichorus).

AND a beaker he took, 'twas a moderate flagon for three cups,
And he held it and drank, then anear him did Pholus dilute it and put.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Notice the fine rhythm of this otherwise meaningless fragment of a drinking song.]

THE HEAD OF A MAIDEN.

(*From Praxilla*).

O AT the window, a-looking adown so sweetly,
Head of a maid!—of a maid who is now no maiden!

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—I wish I could use Headlam's rendering of the second line:
"Maiden head, maiden head,
Maidenhead no more!"]

LIFE'S THEATRE.

(*From Palladas*).

ALL our life is a stage and a play: then learn to be playful,
Put by thine earnest manner, or put up with pains.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—What a different sentiment about the world's stage is Jacques's in Shakespeare's "As You Like It"!]

CLAUDIA.

(From a Latin Epitaph).

STRANGER! I write but little; stand, and read it thro',
Here is the tomb scarce beauteous of a beauteous wife.
The name her parents called her by was Claudia.
Her husband she did cherish in her own true heart.
Two sons she fashion'd into being: one of these
On earth she leaves, the other under earth she lays.
With speech full polish'd, also with a useful gait,
Her home she kept, her wool she made. I've said.
Begone.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—An epitaph like this, perhaps, is worth more than a suffrage! Remember Cowper's lines:

"Silent and chaste she steals along,
Far from the world's gay busy throng;
With gentle yet prevailing forge,
Intent upon her destined course;
Graceful and useful all she does,
Blessing and blest where'er she goes."]

HELIODORA.

(*From Meleager*).

WITHERS the crown that encloses the forehead of Heliodora,
While she shines herself, she that is crown of the crown.
Pour, and again and again and again pledge Heliodora;
Pledge, with the wine-goblet mingle the name that is sweet.
Wetted by me with the myrrh, as it was last evening upon her,
So I may call her to mind, twine me my brow with the crown.
Weepeth the rose love-loving, behold! since truly her forehead,
Pillow'd, alas, somewhere else than my bosom, it knows.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—A fine drinking-song! The trisyllabic endings of the pentameter in the original have been preserved.]

TIMOCREON.

(*From Simondes*).

MUCH have I eaten, and much have I drunk, much ill have I spoken
'Gainst mankind, and I lie, Rhodian Timocreon.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Observe the Athenian simplicity! How well it describes many a mortal's life! Compare Rochester's mock epitaph on Charles II.]

A DEATH-SONG.

(*From Bede*).

ERE the need-journey no one may be
More mind-thoughtful than is meet for him,
To keep pondering, ere his last parting,
What his spirit's share of good will be,
His death-day o'er, doom awarded.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—I almost hear the venerable Teuton fluting like a swan his own death.]

THE DYING SWAN.

(*From Martial*).

SWEET are the songs he attunes with a tongue that trembles and falters :
All tuneful is the swan, singing his dirges himself.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Compare Tennyson:
"Like some full-breasted swan,
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs."]

THE DYING MAN.

From Vasishtha).

O NEVER—so, Varuna, speed—
The earthy house I'll enter, King:
Be kind, O Ruler Good, be kind.

What time I go all tremblingly
Like blown-up skin, O Thunderer,
Be kind, O Ruler Good, be kind.

Thro' want of strength, O Powerful One,
I err'd and went astray, O Pure:
Be kind, O Ruler Good, be kind.

As in the waters' midst I stood.
Thirst came upon thy worshipper:
Be kind, O Ruler Good, be kind.

Whatso like this, Varuna, 'gainst the heavenly host,
Whatever dire offence we mortal men commit,
Howso in thoughtlessness thy laws we violate,
Do not for that transgression punish us, O God.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Varuna in the Rigveda was the Moral Governor of the Universe, a God of the Sky, and he became the Neptune of the later Indian mythology. His worshipper here seems to be suffering from an attack of dropsy, and refuses to go into the grave. The old Indians sometimes buried, and sometimes burnt their dead.]

NACHIKETAS.

(From the Kathopanishad).

(NACHIKETAS).

THIS constant doubt about a man departed—
Some say he is, and others say he is not—
This do I wish to know of thee as teacher:
Of all thy promised boons this is the third one.

(YAMA).

The Gods themselves, of yore, herein had doubtings:
Not easy 'tis to know, subtle this matter:
Another boon demand, O Nachiketas,
O do not press me, of this boon acquit me.

(NACHIKETAS).

The Gods themselves, they say, herein had doubtings:
And thou, O Death, dost say "'Tis hard to know it":
And no one but thee may be found to tell it:
No other boon at all can equal this one.

(YAMA).

Ask of me centenarian sons and grandsons,
Large herds and elephants and gold and horses;
Ask of me wide extent of earth to bide in;
And live thyself as many autumns please thee.

If of some other boon like this thou thinkest,
Ask that and also wealth and life long-lasting;
Bide thou in mighty earth, O Nachiketas;
All long'd-for things to taste at will I bid thee.

What long'd-for things are hard to gain 'mid mortals,
Ask all those long'd-for things at will and pleasure;
These lovely Nymphs have cars with them and tabors,
And such as these may not be gain'd by mortals:
These will I give, and do thou make them serve thee:
O Nachiketas, as to death enquire not.

(NACHIKETAS).

Day-lasting these: O Death, whatso the mortal
In all his senses hath of strength, they wear it:
Even the whole of life is but too little:
Thine be the cars, be thine the dance and music.

It is not wealth that may content a mortal:
Wealth we shall get, if only we have seen thee:
And we shall live as long as thou hast power:
Therefore, the boon that I may ask is that one.

Gone up to those that age not and that die not,
Subject to age and death below, self-conscious,
And musing o'er the joys of love and beauty,
Who may delight in gaining life too lasting?

What people thus do doubt about, O Death-God,
What is about the great hereafter, tell us:
This boon that enters deep into the secret,
And nothing else, doth Nachiketas ask for.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—An intense insight into life, a hankering peep beyond death, an indefatigable questioning about Brahma,—such is the philosophy of the Upanishads. Look up what Schopenhauer says on the subject. I have not translated that part of the Kathopanishad where the nature of Brahma is discussed, as the reader can get a pretty good idea from Emerson's "Brahma" and Swinburne's "Hertha."]

THE DEATH OF BEOWULF.

"THOU'RT the endmost left, out of our kinsmen,
'Mongst Wægmundings. Took Fate away
All mine own men to God's order
Earls in their ardour. I'll be after them."
That was the lording's last-spoken word
'Mongst his breast-thoughts, ere the bale chose he,
Hot war-wellings: from his heart outwent
Soul to seek out sooth-seekers' doom.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—God's order—See the translation of "metud-sceafte" in Wyatt's "Beowulf." Endmost left—Compare Tennyson: "Sir Bedivere, the last of all his peers." That word "last"!]

THE LAST IAMB

(From Chénier).

AS a last ray of light, as a last breath of sky,
Doth cheer the close of a fair day,
So at the scaffold's foot my lyre again I try:
Perchance my turn will come straightway:
Perchance before, this hour, led in a circle round,
Upon the dial bright hath put,
In sixty little steps with which its course is bound,
Its mellow-toned and wary foot,
The slumber of the tomb will shut mine eyelids fast:
Ere, of the halves that form a pair,
This verse begun by me hath come upon the last,
Perchance within these walls worn bare
The messenger of death, pale ghosts' recruiter grim,
By cursed soldiers onward led,
A-shaking with my name these corridors long and dim,—
Where, in the crowd, lone, quickly sped,
I wander, sharpening these chasing darts of crime,
Too feeble props of injured truth,—
Is up to stop at once upon my lips the rime,
And, chaining mine arms without ruth,
Drag me on, gathering in crowd upon my path
My pent-up comrades looking sore,
Who knew me all of them before the doom of wrath,
But do not know me any more.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Quite sentimental!—but there is no harm in sentimentality, if it can produce poetry like this. The wonder of it is, how could a man in the face of death be so sentimental? The lines that follow the present extract show this half-Greek as a sort of a Socrates dying for truth. Here we have the best iamb that there is in French.]

LIFE AND DEATH.

(From the Countess of Blessington)

WHAT art thou, life?
A weary strife
Of pain and care and sorrow;
Long moments of smart,
And pleasures—how short!—
That fly on the morrow.

Death, what art thou
To whom all do bow,
From the sceptred king to the slave?
The last and best friend
All our sorrows to end,
Thine empire's in the grave.

Whenso all is fled,
Thou givest a bed,
Where we calmly sleep:
The wounds are all heal'd,
The dreary eyes are seal'd,
That long did wake and weep.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Remember Hood's lines:

"Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery
Swift to be hurl'd—
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world!"

Contrast Christina Rossetti's sentiment about life and death

"Where love is, there is bliss
That will not pass:
Where love is,
Dies away—'Alas!'"]

BALDER'S DREAM.

(*From the Older Edda*).

SOON the gods were gather'd in council,
And goddesses given to speeches;
And hereon ponder'd powers of heaven,
Why fear'd Balder baleful visions.

Up rose Odin, olden father,
And on Swift-slider saddle laid he;
Rode then down to darkening Hell,
Met the hound-whelp that from Hell did come.

He was bloody of breast shapen,
And the Spell-Father sped forth longwhile;
On rode Odin, Earth's way trembled,
He came to the high-built Hellish stronghold.

Then rode Odin to the Orient door,
Where he wot the witch was lying;
To the weird woman wake-spells spake he,
Till, driv'n to rise, dead words she spake:

"What man is this, most strange to me,
Who maketh weary worn-out spirit?
O'er-snow'd by snow, and smit by rain,
And drench'd by dew-drift, dead was I longwhile."

ODIN SPAKE:

"Way-man hight I, son of War-man;
Thou teach me Hell, I tell of Earth:
Whose be the benches strown with bangles,
Floors fair-looking flowing with goldwork?"

THE WITCH SPAKE!

" Here's for Balder some brewèd mead,
Shining bowl-drink shield-o'erlidded;
And gods' offspring bide him gladly.
Need-forced spake I, now I'm silent."

ODIN SPAKE:

" Silent, witchwife! thy lore seek I,
Till all known be, lore I ask yet:
Who to Balder the bane causeth,
And Odin's son ousts from life-breath?"

THE WITCH SPAKE:

" High holds Hoder heath-branch famous;
He to Balder the bane causeth,
And Odin's son ousts from life-breath,
Need-forced spake I, now I'm silent."

ODIN SPAKE:

" Silent, witchwife! thy lore seek I,
Till all known be, lore I ask yet:
Who pays Hoder heavy vengeance,
And Balder's bane bears forth bale-ward?"

THE WITCH SPAKE:

" Rindr holds Wala in Halls Western,
He doth Odin's son one night carry;
Hand he laves not, nor head combeth,
Till bale-ward he bear Balder's foeman.
Need-forced spake I, now I'm silent."

ODIN SPAKE:

" Silent witchwife: thy lore seek I,
Till all known be, lore I ask yet:
Who be the maidens that moan and weep
And heaven-ward hold up hoods that hide them?

THE WITCH SPAKE :

" Thou'rt no Way-man, as I weenèd :
But art Odin, olden father ! "

ODIN SPAKE :

" Thou'rt no witchwife, nor weird woman,
But art triple terrors' mother ! "

THE WITCH SPAKE :

" Ride home, Odin, and hence boast thou !
None thus coming knows news from me,
Till loosed Lokî leaves off fetters,
And direful doom 'dreadsome cometh."

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—" Balder's Dream " had the honour of a translation by Gray, who, however, missed the rhythm of the original. Look up the allusions in Macdowall's " Asgard and the Gods." We expect to read something fine about Balder the Beautiful in the forthcoming Part V. of Frazer's " Golden Bough." Odin going to the witchwife reminds me of " that Bellona's bridegroom," Macbeth.]

SHADOWY SHAPES.

(From Goethe).

YE come anear again, O Shapes that hover!
As early ye to my dim sight did shine.
Shall I, this once, my hold on you recover?
Feel I my heart to that deceit incline?
Ye crowd more near! Come on, so take me over,
As ye with mist and cloud around me twine;
My bosom feels in youthful manner shaken
With wizard airs, by which your train's o'ertaken.

Ye bring with you my glad days' apparition,
And many dear-loved Shades do rise up here;
All like an olden half-forgot tradition,
Appears First Love, with Friendship ever near
Now Pain returns; Remorse with repetition
Doth hold Life's mazy wandering career,
And names the Good, which, of the moments cheery
By Fate deprived, fled hence to leave me dreary.

They hearken not the songs that follow fleeting,
The souls, to whom mine earliest songs I sang:
Dispersed for ever is the friendly meeting,
Grown faint, alas! the earliest echoes' clang.
My tune is to the unknown many beating,
Their very clap doth work my heart a pang;
And whoso else my tune with gladness flatter'd,
If now they live, all o'er the world are scatter'd.

And I am seized by a long-unwonted longing
For yonder stilly Ghost-land true and dire:
There sways now, in an undecided twanging,
My whisper'd tune, like the Æolian lyre;

A thrill runs thro' me, tear on tear falls thronging,
The strong heart feels a weakness all entire;
What I possess, meseems, all widely glideth,
And what was fled, turns real and abideth.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—In these four stanzas we see the whole personality of Goethe, Goethe who was a man of strong love and hate, who stole into female hearts to rip them up and pilfered their sweets to hoard them in verse. Such a character seems, in our day, to be the artistic standard of Mr. Arthur Symons, whose love poems are purposely made to look like glass-cases in which live-caught butterflies are pinned up for show. The combination of masculine and feminine endings is essential to the rhythm of Goethe's "octave rime." I prefer the reading "Mein Lied" (my tune) to "Mein Leid" (my plaint) in St. 3, l. 5. I do not understand Bayard Taylor's rendering "my treasures."]

LUCIFER.

(From Vondel).

YE speedy-wingèd Sprites, do stay our chariot now,
The morning-star of God at zenith lifts its brow;
Its height is reach'd; and lo! the moment is not far
When Lucifer must set before this rising star,
This double-breasted star that rises from below
And seeks the way above, to tarnish Heaven's glow
With splendour born of earth. No more should ye entwine
Proud Lucifer's attire with diadems that shine,
Nor gild his forehead high with glory's dawning crown,
The morning-star, to which the Archangels kneel adown.
Another splendour now doth sweep into the light
Of God, whose radiance doth drown our vaunted might,
As to the eyes of man, on earth below, the sun
By day puts out the stars. The shades of night so dun
Bedim the Suns of Heaven and Angels of the Sky:
For, Man hath won himself the heart of the Most High,
Within his Paradise created fair of late.
He is the friend of Heaven. Our wretched servile state
Doth even now begin. Go hence, rejoice, and now
Serve, honour this new race, like slaves in act to bow.
For God came Man to be, and we for him were made.
Let then the Angels bend their bright necks to be laid
Beneath his feet. Let each his biddings now await,
And bear him even to the highest Thrones in state
On hands or wings; for now the portion to us given
Shall pass to him who is the chosen son of Heaven.
We, the first-born, shall brook within this Realm our plight.

The son, born on that day, the sixth, and shapen quite
In likeness of the Sire, shall win himself the crown.
And right and meet it was, to him was handed down
The mighty sceptre-staff, which in its might shall make
Us even, the first-born, to tremble and to shake.
No contradiction here now holds: ye heard it told,
When Gabriel's trumpet spake right at the gate of gold.

September, 1908.

[NOTT.—Did Milton imitate Vondel? or did they live in the same atmosphere?]

SATAN.

(From the so-called Cædmon).

THEN spake the arrogant monarch, once of angels brightest,
Whitest in heaven, and to his Househead dear,
Lord's belovèd, till they sinn'd lightly,
And for the great madness God even grew
Mightily mind-wroth, cast him amidst that ruin,
Down into the death-bed, and shaped him a dreaded title,
Quoth the highest should be callèd
Satan since then, bade him in the swarthy hell-pit
Bide in the bottom, not with God to battle.
Satan spake out, sorrowing said,
For he henceforth must hold the hell-pit,
Bide in the bottom—once God's bode he,
White in heaven, till his heart did urge,
And his arrogance most of all things,
That he would not work the Host-Lord's
Word worthily. Well'd within him
Heart-pride haughty, hot was without him
Woful wrath-doom; these words he spake:
"This narrow place is not at all like
That other which we knew erewhile,
High in heaven-land, which to me my Househead gave,
Tho' we for the All-Ruler must not own it,
Rule over our realm. Yet he hath not acted right,
As he hath fell'd us fire-ward to the bottom,
Here in hot hell, robb'd of heaven-land,
Hath it mark'd out for man's offspring
To be set in it. It is my sorest woe;

That Adam shall, who of earth was wrought,
Of my strong-shapen stool be owner,
Dwell in my dwelling, and we this dole shall suffer,
Harm in this hell-pit. Woe ! woe ! had I power of hand,
And might only once get me out hence,
Bide one winter season, then with this band I—
But lie about me bonds of iron,
Rides me fettering rope. I am reft of realm :
Hard am I held by hellish fetters,
Firmly fasten'd. Here is fire mighty
Over and under : not once I saw
Loathlier landscape : flames are allay'd not,
Hot over hell-pit, I am held by rings,
Rough-harden'd rope, robb'd of motion,
Deprived of my footfall ; fasten'd my feet are,
Hands are hinder'd ; to the hell-portals
Ways are wall'd up ; so not a whit I may
Doff this limb-fetter. Lie about me,
Hard of iron, hotly hammer'd,
Grates gigantic : therewith God hath me
Held in a halter."

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Was Milton indebted to the so-called Cædmon? See Cook's "Milton and Cædmon."]

THE WHALE.

NOW I tell again the fish-kind's tale.
I'll in song-fashion give out the story,
Thro' thought of mind, of the mighty whale,
Which is adversely often met with,
Fearful and fierce to frith-wanderers,
Creatures each one, which is call'd by name
Frith-stream-floater, Fastitocalon.
It is rugged like rough-shaped rock-stone,
Such as roveth by rim of ocean,
Sand-hills about it, sea-islets' chief:
So that they ween it, wave-wanderers,
To be some isle that they eye and gaze at,
And then they fasten full-prow'd vessels
To the false isle with anchor-cordage,
Settle the sea-horses right at the sea-end,
And then to the island up they clamber,
Bold of spirit: stand the vessels,
By the shore fasten'd, stream-encircled:
Then they encamp thereon, care-beladen,
Frith-wanderers,—fear they dream not—
On that false isle: flames they waken,
High fire kindle: hearty the men are,
Spirit-laden, loving quiet.

When it feeleth, skill'd in falsehood,
That on it the sea-farers firmly settle,
Make mansion, mad with the weather,
Then suddenly in salty wave
With the shipping downward slideth
Grim ocean's guest, goes to the bottom,
And then in death's mansion drowns and fastens
Ships with sailors. Such are shadows' ways.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Compare this extract with the description of the sea-beast Leviathan in "Paradise Lost," Bk. I. The reader will find an antiquated translation of the rest of the poem in Thorpe.]

THE ODYSSEY, BK. I., LL. 1—10.

(From Homer).

TELL me, O Muse, of the man much-travell'd, who very widely
Wander'd, after he left Troy's hallow'd city forwasted;
Cities of many a folk saw he, knew also the manners;
Many a sorrow at sea bore he in his innermost spirit,
Trying his own live soul to secure, and return of his fellows.
Ne'er was he able his fellows to save, tho' mighty his care was;
Since it was they themselves for a self-made folly did perish,
Acting without forethought, for the oxen of Sol Hyperíon
They did devour, while he cut off their day of returning.
These things partly, O Goddess, O Daughter of Jupiter, tell us.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—The meaning of πολύτροπον is "much-travelled," and not "of many devices or shifts"; see Merry's "Odyssey." Ulysses is a far nobler character in Homer than in the Athenian tragedy. I have preserved the Greek rhythm in l. 6. It is hard to render καὶ in εἰπὲ καὶ ἡμῖν; see Merry's "Odyssey."]

WIDSITH.

WIDSITH spake out, word-stores unlock'd,
He who met with most marvels the world o'er,
Travell'd thro' peoples. Oft he took in hall
Memorable treasure. Him 'mongst Myrgings
Ethelings nourish'd. He with Ealhhild the
True treaty-maker, travelling the first time,
Reach'd the home of Hreths' autocrat,
East of Ongle, Eormanric the
Fierce faith-breaker. Then gan he speak fully:
"Much have I heard of men holding nations.
Each ruler must reign by usage,
Each one like others own the country,
Who in his royal throne would thrive always."

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Widsith means "the Far-farer," and reminds one of Ulysses.]

THE SEAFARER.

I OF myself can sing a true-song,
Tell my travels, how I in days toilsome
Hours of hardship oft sufferèd,
Bitter breast-care bore within me,
On keel did come by care-dwellings many,
Horrid hurl of waves. I had oft to hold
Noisome night-watch at nodding ship-prow,
As on cliffs 'twas knocking; cold-o'ertaken
Both my feet were frost-enfetter'd,
Cold-encumber'd; then cares were heaving
Hotly my heart thro'; hunger in me tore
Sea-wearied sprite. This he doth not see,
To whom earth's fortune fairly floweth,
How I all-weary o'er ice-cold sea
Waited a winter, wretched exile,
Cast away from joyful comrades,
And hung by icicles: hail-showers flew.
Nothing I hearken'd but howling sea,
Cold-frozen waves, sometimes clamou.ing swans:
Sought I for beguilement gannets' warble,
And sea-gulls' lays for human laughter,
Mews' chirrupings for mead-potion.

Storms were on stone-cliffs beating, thereto terns replied,
Icy-featherèd; full oft the eagle scream'd,
Dewy-featherèd. Not a dear kinsman
Might console my desolate soul.
This he believeth little, who hath joys of life,
Expecteth in cities sufferings slight,
Wild and wine-flush'd, how a-weary oft
On the sea-alley I'd to stay up.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Good old English sailor! Only the tone is a bit too sad: contrast the merry note in Cunningham's poem: "A wet sheet and a flowing sea."]

THE WANDERER.

STILL the lone one looketh for favour,
Mercy of the Maker, tho' mind-weary
Thro' the lake-alley long he must be
Hustling with hand-push hoar-frozen seas,
Treading tracks lonesome : Fate he may entreat not !
Thus said a rover, mindful of sorrows,
Direful death-battles, downfall of comrades :
" Oft by me must I, ev'ry morning,
My sorrows sob out : there's no soul alive,
Whom I my mind-musings may with boldness
Tell all clearly. In truth I know,
For man it is morally meet,
That he his breast-chamber bind up firmly,
Hold his heart-closet, whatso he think of.
Nor may the weary-soul'd war with Fortune,
Nor may the sad spirit find out succour :
So do fame-seekers fieriest thoughts
In their breast-closets bind up firmly.
So I my mind-musings must now master,—
Oft o'er-wearied, ousted from country,
From friends afar !—bind them in fetters,
For of yore my good gold-bestower
Earth ate up in gloom, and I all abject
Went winter-weary over waters in chains,
Sought thy drear castle, dealer of treasure,
Where far or near haply to find him
Who the mead-castle might remember,
Or to me comradeless offer comfort,

Keep me with kindness. Knows he who feeleth
How direful is dole as a fellow,
When but few are the friendly patrons:
Winneth he exile, not well-wrought gold,
Frost in the bosom, not fruit of earth;
Remembers the hall-waiters and wealth-winnings,
How in glad manhood his gold-giver
Bade him to banquet: bliss all is gone!"

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Does it not remind you of Lamb's "Old Familiar Faces" and of Moore's "Light of Other Days"?]

THE WIFE'S COMPLAINT.

I THIS song render, of me all sorrowful,
Of my self-seen fate: this may I say,
Whatso woes I brook'd, since I wax'd in age,
New or old ones, none more than now!
Ah, I endure the doom of my dire exile!
Erst my husband went, hence from the people,
Over madding waves. I mused daily,
Where my lord-lover's land was lying.
Then I fared and went, follow'd to seek him,
Wretched exile for my woe-hardship:
Began that fellow's friends to be planning,
Thro' vicious thought, to divide us twain,
So we most widely in the world-kingdom
Lived loathliest, and I long'd inly.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—There is a true Teutonic ring in this exquisite love-plaint. Contrast the joyous note in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's lines:

"The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine
With pulses that beat double."]

ACHILLES AND CHRYSES.

(From Homer).

SO did he speak: and in dread did the old man suffer his orders,
Went, and was mute, by the brim of the loud long-bellowing ocean.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—The old man—The strict sense of ὁ γέρων is "he, the old man," as Leaf and Bayfield say; but that rendering is inconvenient in the present context. I am not sure that my rendering of the second line has all that there is in Homer's line: βῆ δ' ἀκέων παρὰ θῖνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης. Notice the effect of the opening monosyllable cut off from the rest of the line; a favourite devise with Tennyson."]

VARUNA AND VASISHTHA.

(*From Vasishtha*).

WHEN with Varuna I did mount the vessel,
When forward we did urge the midmost ocean,
When o'er the waves with barges we did wander,
We swung together in the swing full beauteous.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—The friendship between the God Varuna and his worshipper the sage Vasishtha is one of the charming pictures in the Rigveda. In this verse there is an allusion to their boating excursion on the sea.]

INDIA FROM THE INDIAN OCEAN.

(*From Kalidâsa*).

FROM far, as on a wheel of iron, slender,
All blue with tamarisks and palms extended,
Outshines the briny ocean's margin yonder,
Like streak of rust-mark with the wheel-rim blended.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Notice the idea of level expanse given by long vowels and liquid consonants reproduced from the original, which is a remarkable piece.]

THE EARTH FROM A DESCENDING SKY-WAIN.

(*From Kalidasa*).

THE earth, it seems, is climbing down from tops of hills
swimming upward to the sight;
The state of lying in the midst of leaves, is left,
with the rise of trunks, by trees;
Expanding, tho' their waves were lost in narrowness,
rivers slowly come to light;
By someone tost-up as it were, behold, the world
to my side is brought with ease.

(Translated January, 1908).

[NOTE.—The relativity of motion cannot be better represented. A balloonist or an air-sailor will appreciate this passage. This is taken from my translation of Kalidasa's "Sakuntala and her Keepsake."]

THE PASSING SCENERY FROM A SWIFT CAR.

(From Kalidasa).

WHAT unto sight is small,
suddenly appears to be of mighty size;
What's in the middle cleft,
seems as tho' it were all seamless and all one;
What's by its nature bent,
even that is wholly straight-shaped to mine eyes;
To me is naught afar,
nor is naught anear awhile, so swift we run!

(Translated November, 1907).

[NOTE.—The optical illusion in swift motion cannot be better described. This is taken from my translation of Kalidasa's "Sakuntala and her Keepsake." I am strongly reminded of Mr. A. C. Benson's description of the sensation of speeding through an English landscape in a railway train:

"We fly on iron wheels, and mark
The changing glade.
Northward the shuddering axles reel
With merry din;
Like moving spokes on some slow wheel
The furrows spin.
The copse, the farmstead shifts; and both
Fly like the wind.
Swift runs the distant spire, as loth
To lag behind."

DUSHYANTA AND THE DEER.

(From Kalidasa).

BEAUTIFUL with neck full-bent,
oft and oft his eager eye
casting on the chasing car;
With the hind-half entering,
in the fear of falling shafts,
thro' his fore-frame all amain;
With the half-chew'd turf, that slips
from his mouth agape with toil,
strewing all his way afar;
Lo! with lofty-leaping speed,
in the air he fareth most,
little fareth on the plain.

(Translated November, 1907)

[NOTE.—Notice the deep insight into animal psychology. How the deer acts under fear! This is taken from my translation of Kalidasa's "Sakuntala and her Keepsake."]

DUSHYANTA AND THE STEEDS.

(*From Kalidasa*).

THEIR reins all loosen'd now, their fore-frames to the full outspread,
All still their yak-tail crests, their ears all motionless—upright,
Not even by the dust, which they themselves upraise, outfled,
They run, yon chariot-team, in envy of the deer's quick flight.

(Translated November, 1907)

[NOTE.—The idea in the third line is inimitable. This is taken from my translation of Kalidasa's "Sakuntala and her Keepsake."]

NANDIN IN THE PENANCE-WOOD OF SIVA.

(*From Kalidasa*).

NO stir on trees; bees did not hum nor hover;
Dumb grew the fowl; and calm the deer did wander:
He held his ruling rod: the wood all over,
As in a picture placed, stood still thereunder.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Ah, "the inviolable quietness"! Does it not remind you of Alcman?]

RAMA'S BRIDGE.

(*From Kalidasa*).

VEIDEHI, see, near Malay cleft asunder
By this my bridge, the mass of waves foam-whitening,
As, by the milky way, with Autumn's splendour,
The sky is cleft, displaying stars all brightening.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This quatrain should be considered when we discuss the question of Kalidasa's authorship of the Prakrit epic called "The Building of the Bridge."]

BEOWULF'S VOYAGE.

(From "Beowulf").

THEN went over the water, wind-impell'd, the
Fleet all foam-neck'd, almost fowl-like,
Till about one hour on the morrow,
She the prow-curved had pass'd forward,
So the sea-farers saw where land was,
Sea-cliffs shining, steepy mountains,
Wide sea-noses; then was the earl's sailing
Ended over ocean. Then at once up the
Weder people to the plain clamber'd,
Fasten'd the sea-wood; sarks they put off,
Gear of battle; God they glorified,
As their wave-faring was so easy.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—A sweet foretaste of Swinburne's sea-songs! I get a puff of foam on my face when I read the original. Homer would not have been ashamed of such lines.]

GNATS.

(From Cynewulf).

THIS air beareth little beings
Over mound-summits. They are most dusky,
Swarthy, sallow-coated, sweet of warble;
Swarming go they, sound they loudly,
Tread the bowery nesses, sometimes burgh-castles
Kept by mortals. Call them yourselves.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—"There can be no doubt as to the authorship of the riddles of the Exeter Book, the first of them being a riddle on the name Cynewulf itself. Many of these riddles are true poems, containing beautiful descriptions of nature, and all of them show Cynewulf's charm and grace of language."—*Sweet.*]

THE VICTORY OF PSAUMIS.

(*From Pindar*).

(*Strophe*).

O DRIVER uppermost of thunder with a foot
untiring, Jove!—for thine the Hours are
Who these mine odes of ever-veering measure
in a lightsome round led forward
To attest the highest prizes' glory.
When friends gain good success,
the joy at once of hearing the news,
So sweet, doth thrill the noble.
But, son of Saturn, who dost Etna hold,
Laying a crushing burden upon the hundred heads of
Typhon full of might,
Take kindly this Olympic game,
For the Graces' sake, this joyous revel,

(*Antistrophe*).

A lasting light that fadeth not of virtues eminent: for
Psaumis' triumph cometh
A-driving, who, enwreathed with crown of olives
brought from Pisa, seeks—bestir thee!—
Camarina's glory. God be kindly
Unto his latest prayers,
since I approve of him very much
Prepared to tend his horses,
And ever greeting guests of every sort,
And unto city-loving quietude with a spotless judgment
still inclined.
Not with a lie stain I my speech,
'Tis experiment that testeth mortals.

(*Epode*).

By it Clymenus's offspring
From gather'd Lemnian ladies'
Disdainful words was wholly freed.
All in a brazen coat of mail he won the race;
To Hypsipele he shouted,
going forward to the crown:
"Such now am I for swiftness' sake,
In might of hand and heart alike.
So, there grow upon the heads of youthful men
Snowy locks full oft, ere yet the age of manhood comes
In right and proper time."

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—See the analysis of the metre of the 4th Olympic, which is here translated, in Donaldson's "Pindar." Pindar is scarcely beaten by Vergil in the Aeneid, Book V. Racing and running were among the oldest Aryan games, as we find references to them even in the Rigveda.]

THE VICTORY OF SUDAS

(*From Vasishtha*).

(*Vasishtha*).

TO you, O Leaders, looking out for friendship kind,
Forth went the booty-seekers arm'd with axes broad :
Our Dasa foes ye slew, our Aryan foes as well ;
Sudas ye, Indra and Varuna, help'd with help.

Where heroes meet together with uplifted flags,
In that encounter in which there is nothing good,
Where terror strikes the world and those that see the light,
There to us, Indra and Varuna, spake ye kind,

(*Sudas*).

The limits of the earth all dusky did appear ;
O Indra and Varuna, heavenward rose the noise ;
There stood the people's enemies about me all ;
Thither with help, O hearers of my call, ye came.

(*Vasishtha*).

O Indra and Varuna, with resistless darts
Ye smote down Bheda and ye gave Sudas your help ;
The prayers of these ye heard amid the cries of war ;
Effectual was my service as the Tritsus' priest.

(*Sudas*).

O Indra and Varuna, I am sore beset
By wiles of foes, by mine assailants' acts of feud :
Ye twain, indeed, are lords o'er twofold wealth to rule :
So let us have your help upon the day supreme.

(*Vasishtha*).

To you did call the hosts of both the tribes in war,
To Indra, and Varuna too, to win them wealth,

Where, by the Ten Kings sorely press'd in dire attack,
Ye help'd Sudas, together with the Tritsus all.

The Ten Kings leagued together, offering no rites,
O Indra and Varuna, could not fight Sudas;
True was the praise of heroes sitting at the feast;
The Gods appear'd upon their calling on the Gods.

As in the Ten Kings' Battle he was press'd all round,
Sudas, O Indra and Varuna, got your strength,
Where, clad in white, with homage true, with braided hair,
With prayers, all pious, knelt adown the Tritsus all.

The foes by one of you are in the battles slain,
The laws are by the other kept for evermore;
We call on you, O bounteous Ones, with right good hymns;
To us, O Indra and Varuna, shelter grant.

To us Varuna, Indra, Mitra, Aryaman
Grant glory, mighty shelter spreading far and wide
The quenchless light of right-increasing Aditi,
The song of Savitri the God, we meditate.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is one of the finest historic hymns in the Rigveda. It shows the combination of a war-like spirit and a religious mood, which is characteristically Indian; witness the Rajputs, the Sikhs, the Marhattas and others of later history. Matthew Arnold's lines:—

"She let the legions thunder past
And plunged in thought again,"

and Mr. Stephen Phillips's line:

"And India in meditation plunged,"

require modification. The first stanza of the hymn reminds one of Mr. Henry Newbolt's lines:

"Laden with the spoil of the South, fulfilled with the glory of achievement."

The general tone is that of Rudyard Kipling's lines:

"Jehovah of the Thunders,
Lord God of Battles, aid!"

BRUCE AND THE THREE MEN WHO SWORE HIS DEATH.

(*From Barbour*).

THEY did wait until he was
Come within a narrow pass,
Between a hillside and a lake.
It was so straight, I undertake,
That well he could not turn his horse.
Then unto him they went full force:
One held him by the bridal close,
But Bruce did reach to him such blows
That off his arm and shoulder shook.
Thereon him another took
By the leg; his hand did shoot
Between the stirrup and the foot;
And when the King felt there his hand,
On stirrups straight up did de stand,
And struck with spurs the veering steed,
And forward hurl'd his lance with heed,
So that the ruffian could not get
At his foot: his hand was yet
Under the stirrup, spite of Bruce.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Barbour was the earliest forerunner of Scott.]

THE BATTLE OF MALDON.

WENT the war-wolves, of water they reck'd not,
Wikings' war-band, west over Panta,
Over the sheen water shields they carried,
Seamen to landward bore the limewood.
There against foemen full-arm'd stood up
Byrhtnoth with warriors; he with bucklers bade
Soon to be built board-walls, and the band battled
Fast with the foemen. Then the fight was near,
Credit in combat; the time came on,
When the fated men should be falling.
There rose a rattle, wheel'd the ravens,
Eagles eager for food: there was on earth a cry.
From hands they hurl'd forth hard-filed lances,
And well-whetted arrows went off;
Bows were busy, board met with spear,
Fierce was the fighting, fell the fighters
On either side, sank the soldiers.

Wounded was Wulfmær, war-bed he chose
Byrhtnoth's kin; with a blade was he,
Son of his sister, swiftly cut off;
But on the Wikings was wreck'd a vengance
I heard that Edward struck at one man
Strongly with his sword-blade, strokes he withheld not
Till at his feet he fell, fated warrior;
For this his master much did thank him,
The bower-keeper, when brought was leisure.
So stood stoutly strong-spirited
Soldiers in struggle, strove intently
Who would be earliest able with blade-point
The luckless men's lives to get at,
Gash with weapons: gore fell on ground.
Stood they stedfast, Byrhtnoth stirr'd them,
Bade the men each one mind the batle,
On the Danes would he deal destruction

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Whoever wrote this battle-piece was a worthy predecessor of Campbell. Remember specially the "Battle of the Baltic," which begins with "Of Nelson and the North."]

THE PUNIC WARS, BK. I., LL. 1—16.

(From Silius Italicus).

TREAT I of arms, wherewith upsoar to the heavens in glory
Æneas' offspring, and the laws Œnotrian savage
Carthage brooks. Give, Muse, to recount toils glorious suffer'd
Erst by the land of the Eve ; what heroes were fashioned in battle,
Eke how many, by Rome, when, to hallow'd treaty unfaithful,
Cadmus' people upon our empire levied a combat ;
Long was it doubtful, upon which citadel finally might rest
All Earth's Fortune her head. Three times with a battle untoward
Compacts sworn in the honour of Jove and the treaties of Fathers
Sidon's leaders did break ; and the sword that was ever ungodly
Thrice caused peace that was made to be broken in folly and rashness.

But, in the midst of the war, for a close and a pillage alternate
Both peoples made plans, and were both on the margin of peril,
Which to be topp'd was allow'd ; and the Dardan leader uprooted
Towns by Agenor uprear'd ; and the courts were beleaguer'd with ramparts,
Punic courts ; and with walls Rome gain'd and protected her safety.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Silius Italicus, like Statius, based his whole poetical art on Vergil.]

PHARSALIA, BK. I., LL. 1—14.

(From Lucan).

WARS on Emathian plains, those wars more dreaded than civil,
Licence given to crime, do I sing, and a puissant people
Turning against its own vitals with a conquering right-hand,
Kindred armies engaged, and, the realm's pact broken asunder,
Contests waged with the might of the stirr'd globe gather'd together
All for the sorrow of all, and the standards bitterly meeting
Standards, eagles alike, and the war-darts threatening war-darts.
What rage, this, citizens, what lawless fury of combat,
While ye had nations to hate, to be bent on Latian bloodshed?
While ye had Babylon proud to despoil of her trophies for ever,
Trophies Italian, and while Crassus' shade wander'd unsated,
Wars did it please you to wage, such wars as would bring you no triumphs?
Ah! how much of the earth and the ocean we might have provided
All with the self-same blood that the hands of the citizens shed forth!

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Lucan was the poet of liberty and a mourner for the lost Republic.]

ROLAND THE MAD, CANTO I., STT. 1—4.

(From Ariosto).

LADIES, and knights, and arms, and courtesies
Of love, and deeds of bold emprise, I sing
That happ'd in days when, passing overseas,
The Moors from Afric woes to France did bring,
Following the rage and youthful extasies
Of Agramant their King, who, glorying,
Proceeded to avenge Troyano slain
Upon King Charles the Roman suzerain.

I'll tell of Roland in the self-same strain
Things unattempted yet in prose or rime,
When Love o'ercame with rage and madness vain,
A man esteem'd so wise in former time;
If she, who in such wise doth o'er me reign
That my small wit doth hourly waste my prime,
Will on that score allow me that much skil
Which doth suffice my promise to fulfil.

So please you, Hercules' most noble son,
You who adorn our age and make it glow,
Hippolytus, to take this which alone
I'll give you as I can, your servant low
Tho' much I owe you, I can pay that loan
In part with words and what in ink may flow
To give you little I do not appear,
For, all that I can give I give you here.

Me shall you hear, amid the worthiest,
Whom I to name with fittest praise prepare,
Record Rogero great, the earliest
Root of you and your sires of glory fair;

His lofty worth and valour doughtiest
I'll make you hearken if you lend your ear,
And your high thoughts may yield a little space
So that, thro' them my verse may gain its place

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—The first two lines sum up the epic of Ariosto. He had a considerable influence on Spenser, whose theme was the same as his, and whose stanza called the Spenserian Stanza was an improvement on the ottava rima in which he wrote.]

GLORIANA.

(From Spenser).

LO! I, whose Muse erewhile assumed the mask,
As taught by time, of lowly shepherds' weeds,
Am now compell'd—a much unmeeter task—
For trumpets stern to change mine oaten reeds,
And sing of knights' and ladies' gentle deeds;
Whose glory, having slept in silence long,
Me, all too mean, the Muse's bidding leads
To blazen far amongst her learned throng:
Fierce wars and faithful loves shall be my theme of song

Help then, O holy virgin chief of nine,
Thy novice all too weak to work thy will;
Lay from that everlasting desk of thine
The volumes old, which there lie hidden still,
Of fairy knights and fairest Tanaquil,
Whom that most noble Briton Prince so long
Sought thro' the world, and suffer'd so much ill,
That I must rue his undeserved wrong:
O help thou my weak wit, and sharpen my dull tongue.

And thou, O child revered of Jove on high,
Fair Venus' son, thou who thine arrow dire
At that good knight so skilfully didst ply
That in his heart it kindled glorious fire;
Lay now thy ebon bow of deadly ire,
And with thy mother mild come to mine aid;
Come, both; and with you bring thy warlike sire,
In loves and gentle jollities array'd,
After his bloody spoils and rage have been allay'd.

And with them eke, O Goddess heavenly bright,
Mirror of grace and majesty divine,
Great Lady of the Greatest Isle, whose light
Like Phœbus' lamp throughout the world doth shine,
Shed thy fear beams into these eyes of mine,
And raise my thoughts, too humble and too vile
To think of that too glorious type of thine,
The subject of my poor and lowly style:
And this to hear vouchsafe, revered and dear, awhile!

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Tanaquil or Gloriana is Queen Elizabeth, and the Briton Prince is the Earl of Leicester. The apotheosis of Queen Elizabeth was a characteristic of the age. She is represented by Shakespeare as a Diana "In maiden meditation, fancy free." Style—I prefer to take the Spenserian word "stile" in the sense of "style" rather than that of "a pen," as Kitchin does in his edition of the "Faery Queen."]

THE MAID OF ORLEANS.

(*From Schiller*).

SEE you the rainbow in the airy realm ?
The heavens open wide their golden door,
In choir of angels stands she glowing there,
She holds her deathless Son upon her breast,
Her arms she stretches smiling unto me.
What's come of me ? Light clouds do lift me up,
My heavy mail doth turn to winged weeds ;
Above—above—the earth doth fly behind,
Short is the pain, and deathless is the joy.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—I let these lines speak for themselves,]

WILLIAM TELL.

(*From Schiller*).

SO I must fall into the foeman's hands,
The nearest shore of rescue full in view!
There it lies! I can reach it with mine eyes;
Out there can force its way a loud halloo;
There is the bark, which well may waft me o'er,
And here I must lie, helpless, in despair!

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—A common metaphor very well expressed.]

THE KINSHIP OF SOULS.

(*From Bhavabhuti*).

THERE doth run throughout all objects
some cause that's inly blended;
'Tis not qualities external
engage affections tender;
At the rise of sun its petals
the lotus holds distended;
At the rise of moon its moisture
the lunar gem doth render

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Bhavabhuti is the tenderest poet of affection in all Indian literature. In another passage he speaks of the "magnetic attraction" between kindred souls, whether their kinship be one of blood or of love. It is only the kinship of the sexes which is glorified in the following lines from Mr. Arthur Symons's "Magnificat":

"The pulses of our bodies knew
Each other: our hearts leapt and sung."]

INDRA.

(*From Grîtsamada*).

WHO, soon as he was born, the first, high-minded,
Himself a God, the Gods by might exceeded,
Before whose breath both Heaven and Earth did tremble
For might of manhood; he, O men, is Indra.

Who caused the Earth that stagger'd to be stedfast,
Who caused the Hills that moved to cease from motion,
Who measured out the mid-air all too ample,
Who set up Heaven; he, O men, is Indra.

Who slew the Dragon, freed the Seven Rivers,
Who drove the kine from out the cave of Bala,
Who from between two stones the Fire engender'd,
Spoiler in battles; he, O men, is Indra.

By whom this Universe was made to quiver,
Who sent the lower Dasa race to caverns,
Who like a gambler winning myriads took off
The foeman's riches; he, O men, is Indra.

Of whom they ask "Where's he?" in awful manner,
And even say of him "He doth exist not,"
He like a scourge doth slay the foeman's cattle,
Have faith upon him; he, O men, is Indra.

Who stirs the rich to action, who the lowly,
Who stirs the priest, the suppliant, and the poet,
Who, fair of features, aids the press-stone-joiner,
The Soma-presser; he, O men, is Indra.

Who holds in sway the horses, whose the cows are,
Whose all the villages, whose all the chariots,
Who made the Sun, who did the Dawn engender,
Who guides the Waters; he, O men, is Indra.

Whom Heaven and Earth brought close together summon,
The weaker and the stronger, both the foemen
Two men upon the self-same chariot mounted
Call severally; he, O men, is Indra.

Without whose help the people may not conquer
Whom in the midmost fight for help they summon,
Who of the Universe became the image,
Who shakes the unshaken; he, O men, is Indra.

Who all the carriers of mighty evil,
Ere yet they knew their danger, slew by thunder,
Who to the bold concedeth not his boldness,
Who slays the Dasyu; he, O men, is Indra.

Who lookt for Sambara in hills abiding
And in the fortieth autumn there did find him,
Who slew the Dragon waxing in his prowess,
The Demon lying; he, O men is Indra.

Who with his seven reins, the pourer powerful,
Set free to flow at will the Seven Rivers,
Who, thunder-arm'd, made Rouhina to tremble
While climbing heavenward; he, O men, is Indra.

The very Heaven and Earth do bow before him,
Before his very breath the Hills do tremble,
Who, known as Soma-drinker, holds the thunder
In arm and hand too; he, O men, is Indra.

Who helps the Soma-pourer, who the brewer,
Who helps the singer, who the priest, with succour,
Whom prayer exalteth, unto whom is Soma,
Whose all this treature ; he, O men, is Indra.

Thou who to pourer and to brewer, Almighty
Full often givest food, in sooth existest ;
May we, O Indra, dear to thee for ever,
With goodly heroes, chant aloud thy praises.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is the oldest Aryan record of theists expostulating atheists. Indra is like Rudyard Kipling's "Jehovah of the Thunders." He is the Jove of Indian mythology.]

THE TWIN ASVINS.

(From Vasishtha).

COME, shining Asvins twain, with goodly horses,
Accepting, Wondrous Ones, his hymn who seeks you;
And eke enjoy oblations that we bring up

Before you stand the maddening juices ready;
Come quickly to enjoy this mine oblation;
Athwart the foeman's call, do hear our summons.

Forth comes your chariot, speedy as the mind is,
Athwart the gloom, with hundred aids, O Asvins,
To us-ward hastening, loving friends of Surya.

When this your stone which seeks its Gods for worship,
Uplifts its voice, distilling for you Soma,
Fair ones, the priest will bring you with oblations.

Wondrous, indeed, the nourishment that ye have;
Thereof a store to Atri ye did offer,
For he receives your succour, dear as he is.

That, too, was yours, O Asvins, what the aged
Chyavana got back, offering oblations,
When ye bestow'd a form to serve him thenceforth.

And Bhujyu, too, O Asvins, by his comrades
Was cast out faithlessly in midmost ocean;
He was deliver'd by your horse that seeks you.

And Vrika when exhausted ye did strengthen;
Ye also hearken'd Sayu when he called you;
Ye who did fill the cow as tho' with water
The barren too with strength by strength, O Asvins.

Here is that bard who with his hymns extols you,
Awaking in the front of dawn, good-minded ;
With food may he, with milk of cow, be nourish'd.
May ye protect us ever with your blessings.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—The Asvins formed the Vedic conception of ministering angels. They were the Dioscuri of ancient India.]

THE MARUTS.

(From Vasishtha)

(The poet muses).

WHO are they, shining,
A nest of heroes?
The youth of Rudra;
So, on good horses.

Of these no person
The springings knoweth·
They only know of
Each other's springhead.

With their own blowings
They strew'd each other;
Like blasts a-sounding,
The Hawks did struggle.

A sage did know of
These things mysterious,
What mighty Prisni
Bore in her inside.

(Blesses the tribal band).

This band of heroes
Be thro' the Maruts
Ever victorious,
Nursing their manhood.

In speed the speediest,
In sheen the sheeniest,
Close-knit to glory,
With prowess fearful.

(*Addresses it*).

Fearful your prowess,
Constant your valour,
So thro' the Maruts
The band be doughty.

Sheeny your valour,
Wrathful your spirits,
Sage-like the minstrel
Of your firm war-band

(*Prays to the Maruts*).

From us for ever
Avert your lightning;
May not your ill-will
Reach us down hither.

Your names endearing
I call, O swift ones,
Till they are sated
Who seek the Maruts.

(*Praises them*).

With goodly weapons,
Impetuous, well-decked,
Eke your own bodies
Yourselves adorning.

Pure are your offerings, O Maruts, pure ones;
Pure sacrifice I render to the pure ones;
By law to truth arrived the law-observers,
Pure by their birth, and pure, and sanctifying.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is almost Greek!]

KING ARTHUR'S COURT.

(From Chrestien de Troyes).

ARTHUR, of Britain goodly king,
Whose prowess teaches us this thing,
That we should be genteel and bold,
Held court so rich as king might hold
At that great feast, which so much cost,
That we should call it Pentecost.
The court at Cardoil was, in Wales.
After the feast, within the halls,
The knights in groups did gather there
Where ladies call'd them to appear,
Or damsels bright, or maidens sweet.
New tales did some of them repeat;
And others spake of love, and all
The anguish and the pains that fall,
And the great good, which oft is found
By pupils to that Order bound,
Which in those days was rich and fair.
Now little of its own is there;
For, nearly all have left it quite,
And so is Love brought to low plight;
For, those who used Love's fire to feel
Did win the title of genteel
And bold and free and honourable.

Now Love is turn'd into a fable,
For they, who feel it in no wise,
Say that they love, but they tell lies,
And they make fables lying quite,
Who boast of it, and have no right.
But, still to speak of those who were,
Those now alive let us forbear!
For, in my view, are worthier far
The dead genteel than knaves that are.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is a typical specimen of the style of the early French court romance. See how differently Arthur is handled by Malory; how differently again by Tennyson; and how differently once more by Mr. Henry Newbolt. We cannot say what the projected "Arturiad" of Milton would have been like.]

THE EYE OF ENVY.

(From Guillaume de Lorris).

SHE did not any object view
Save only with an eye askew.
She had a habit hardly good,
That in the face she never could
See anything in manner plain,
But shut one eye for deep disdain;
For, she did melt with rage, and burn'd,
When anyone to whom she turn'd
Was either bold or fair or kind
Or loved or praised by all mankind.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is from "Le Roman de la Rose," to which Chaucer was so much indebted.]

THE ORIGIN OF KINGSHIP.

(*From Jean de Meung*).

THEIR choice on a great knave did fall,
The brawniest fellow of them all,
The fattest and the tallest thing,
And him they made their lord and king;
He swore that he their laws would tend,
And that he would their homes defend.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Good, Jean de Meung! worthy predecessor of Jean Jacques Rousseau]

THE COCK AND THE GEM.

(*From Marie de France*).

ÆSOP related : A cock did go
Up a dung-hill, and scratch'd it so,
And sought, according to his kind,
His food, as he was wont to find.
A precious gem he did descry,
He saw it bright, and pass'd it by.
" I thought," says he, " I'd find my food
Upon this dung-hill if I could.
Now thee, O gem, I've chanced to see,
Thou shalt not be removed by me.
If thee a rich man did behold,
I know he would set thee in gold,
And thus would wax thy sheen full fair
By means of gold with beauty rare.
As my desire is not in thee,
No honour shalt thou have from me."
Likewise with many folk it is,
If all things come not as they please,
As with the cock and gem hath been.
Of man and woman this we've seen :
Honour at all they do not prize,
They take the worse, the better despise.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This Anglo-Norman poetess had a great share in popularising Æsop in France. The origin of Æsop's Fables is to be sought in the Indian Hitopadesa and Panchatantra.]

THE COCK AND THE PEARL.

(From La Fontaine).

ONCE a cock did run away
With a pearl, which he did lay
With the greatest jeweller;
"I do think it fine," said he;
"But the smallest corn would be
Just the thing I would prefer"

Once a man unletter'd got
Book handwritten, which he brought
To his next-door bookseller;
"I do think it good," said he;
"But the smallest coin would be
Just the thing I would prefer."

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—I do not know if this is a typical specimen of La Fontaine's "Fables," the most French of all French books. But compare him with Marie de France, and also with Gay. Is he not superior to Phædrus?]

MINSTREL LIFE.

(From Colin Muset).

COUNT, the viol I did play
To you in your palace aye;
And you gave me nothing, nay,
Nor my wages did you pay;
'Twas villany.
Faith that I to Mary owe,
Never will I seek you, no;
Poorly doth my alms-bag flow,
And my trunk is furnish'd so.

Therefore, Count, you freely may
Unto me your wish convey;
Sire, an if it please you, pray,
Give me then a present gay
Thro' courtesy.
I do wish, no doubt you know,
Back unto my house to go;
When I come with purse too low,
Ne'er my wife her smiles doth strow.

"Sir Allfrozen," she doth say,
"In what country did you stay,
You who nothing brought away
From town, I see?
How your trunk is folded, lo!
'Tis but wind that makes it blow;
Cursed one, that, to her woe,
In a boat with you would row."

When back home I go my way,
And my wife hath seen that day
On my back the full bag sway,
And myself in garment gray
Deck'd beauteously,
Know, her distaff by her toe
Lays she soon, I do not crow;
She doth smile full free, and oh!
Round my neck her arms doth throw.

Then my page doth go purvey
For my horse his drink and hay,
And my maid without delay
Kills two capons, which to lay
In sauce for me;
And my girl with kindly glow
Gets a comb on me to 'stow;
Then at home my sway doth grow,
More than one in words can show.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is a chapter from Colin Muset's own life.]

SILVIO AND MONICO.

(From Petrarch).

(Silvio).

O MONICO, how now, in lonesome cave
Reclining all in gentle peace, the herd
And cares of tending fields hast thou forsook?
I wander thro' the shaggy hills and woods,
Hapless! I'm cheated. Who this twofold fate
Doth place betwixt twin brothers? To the world
They came thro' one sole mother; and to them
Will not the self-same earth supply a tomb?

(Monico).

O Silvio, why dost thou mourn? why grieve?
Of thine own pain thou art thyself the cause.
Who makes thee rove? Who drives thee to the tops
Of mountain hard to climb, and thro' lone ways
Leads thee to ramble, and among the crags
All green with moss, and to the river-springs
Sonorous?

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—The Italian blank verse had a great share in shaping the English, although the origin of the latter must be sought in England; see Gollancz's Preface to "Cynewulf." Contrast Milton's blank verse, and compare Shelley's, with Petrarch's.]

A BALLATA ON LAURA'S VEIL.

(From Petrarch).

WITHOUT your veil in either sun or shade,
Lady, I see you not,
Since you descried in me the yearning hot,
Which drives all others from my heart decay'd.
The whiles I bore those fine thoughts unrevealed,
Which hold my yearning mind in death prostrate,
I saw some pity lend your face its rose;
But when Love let you know my woful state,
Your flaxen locks were then by veil conceal'd,
And all your loving looks were gather'd close.
What more in you I yearn'd for, off me goes;
Me thus your veil doth hold,
Which, thro' my death by veering hot and cold,
The sweet light of your fine eyes doth o'ershade.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—The history of the ballata is specially interesting to the student of English literature, as it was used by Spenser and Milton among other poets.]

A SESTINA ON A LOVER'S HOURS.

(*From Petrarch*).

TO ev'ry creature that doth lodge in *earth*,
Save but a few, that hold in hate the *sun*,
A time there is for toil, and 'tis the *day*;
But when the heavens lighten up their *stars*,
One goes to hut, and one is housed in *wood*,
To have some rest at least until the *dawn*.

And I, since when begins the beauteous *dawn*
To drive the shades about from over *earth*,
Waking the creatures up in ev'ry *wood*,
Have ne'er a truce with sighs below the *sun*;
Then, when I see aflame with light the *stars*,
I walk, in tears, and yearning after *day*.

When evening puts to flight the radiant *day*,
And when our gloom to others makes their *dawn*,
I muse and wonder at the cruel *stars*,
Which made me palpable as one of *earth*,
And curse the day when first I saw the *sun*,
Which makes me seem a man uprear'd in *wood*.

I think not, there was ever nursed in *wood*
So rough a savage, or by night or *day*,
As she, for whom I moan in shade and *sun*;
And I'm not tired by early sleep or *dawn*,
For, tho' my mortal body be of *earth*,
My stedfast yearning comes from out the *stars*.

Ere I return to you, O shining *stars*,
Or turn adown in midst of Love's sweet *wood*,
Leaving this frame, which shall be trodden *earth*,
Might I see pity in her, which in one *day*
Could make up many years, and till the *dawn*
Could make me rich from time of setting *sun*!

Might I be with her since the parting *sun*,
And might none others see us but the *stars*
For one sole night, and were it never *dawn*,
And were she not to change in verdant *wood*
To cheat and scape mine arms, as on the *day*
When Phœbus chased her here adown on *earth*!

But I'll be under *earth* in sapless *wood*;
The *day* will go all full of tiny *stars*,
Ere to so sweet a *dawn* attains the *sun*.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—It should be noted that the Italian sestina has no rimes as there are in the French sextine, used several times by Swinburne.]

A VILLANELLE ON A TURTLEDOVE.

(*From Passerat.*)

FLEW my turtledove away.
Is it she I listen to?
After her I'll go my way.

For thy mate thou moanest aye,
Ah! likewise for mine I do:
Flew my turtledove away.

If thy love was true by fay,
Just the same my faith was true:
After her I'll go my way.

Wax thy sorrows day by day,
Ever I my loss should rue:
Flew my turtledove away.

View that fair no more I may,
Aught of fair no more I view:
After her I'll go my way.

Death, to whom full oft I pray,
Take the gift that to thee flew:
Flew my turtledove away,
After her I'll go my way.

September, 1908

[NOTE.—The last four lines remind me of D. G. Rossetti's translation of Villon's "To Death, of his Lady." Villanelles seem to be quite common in our day. Swinburne and Mr. Edmund Gosse have written some.]

A VIRELAY ON WORLDLY WISDOM.

(From Middle French).

H! thou seest not
Steps with peril fraught
Whither thou dost flee?
'Tis a wretched lot,
Thus to be distraught
For some ducats' fee.

Thou dost wander, see,
Straight in hell to be,
But, deceived, thou hast no thought:
Think of checking thee
And of being free,
So to answer what was wrought.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—The original is not a perfect virelay, because the first rimes of the first half are not repeated in the second half, as they are in this rendering.]

A LULLABY, IN PANTOUM.

(*From Théodore de Banville.*)

ON margin of this heavenly stream
A thousand birds contending sing.
My child, my sole last good I deem,
Sleep 'neath the tree-boughs flowering.

A thousand birds contending sing.
Upon the rill a swan goes light.
Sleep 'neath the tree-boughs flowering,
O thou, my joy and my delight.

Upon the rill a swan goes light,
In flames of setting sun array'd.
O thou, my joy and my delight,
Sleep soundly, by my song allay'd.

In flames of setting sun array'd,
The olden mount with snow shines clear,
Sleep soundly, by my song allay'd,
Some kindly god protect thee here!

The olden mount with snow shines clear,
Blooms at its foot the ebon-tree.
Some kindly god protect thee here!
Thy tiny mouth is smiling free.

Blooms at its foot the ebon-tree,
By shining metals 'tis conceal'd.
Thy tiny mouth is smiling free,
Like cups of flowers to view reveal'd.

By shining metals 'tis conceal'd,
I see some diamonds ablaze.
Like cups of flowers to view reveal'd,
Thy lip is full of charming rays.

'I see some diamonds ablaze
Upon the mountain's witching brow.
Thy lip is full of charming rays,
Sleep, a sweet dream caress thee now!

Upon the mountain's witching brow
I see some bits of topaz shine.
Sleep, a sweet dream caress thee now,
O shut thy lotus-azure eyne!

I see some bits of topaz shine,
Which drive away each deadly dream.
'O shut thy lotus-azure eyne
On margin of this heavenly stream!

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is a very fine poem, but I doubt if it is quite Malayan. The one French poet who really knew the East was Leconte de Lisle.]

A CHRISTIAN'S ADVICE, IN CHANT-ROYAL.

(*From Marot.*)

WHO loveth God, His kingdom and His sway,
Should nothing but His honour due desire;
And, nathless, man aspireth day by day
To his own good and ease and weal entire,
And takes no thought if aught doth scorn or slight,
In his desires, God's majesty and might.
The greatest number seeks great wealth to gain;
The smallest to great knowledge would attain;
Another to escape dishonour tries;
Another seeks, to make provisions fain,
The frame in health and soul in paradise.

These sweet contending wishes, one may say,
Are like to black and white in one attire;
For, Christ doth promise to His own, that they
Shall have, below, but pangs and sorrows dire.
Moreover, answer me, who is that wight,
Who without death shall reach the heavens bright?
No one, for certain. We must think, again,
Death cannot over us so falsely reign
That we may suffer sorrows in no wise.
Therefore it seems we never can sustain
The frame in health and soul in paradise.

ENVOY.

O royal prince, when God by might will deign
To shake the heavens and the earth amain,
And when the bodies from the mould shall rise
Then to be sure this good we shall obtain—
The frame in health and soul in paradise.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Observe the complexity of the rime-system in the Chant Royal, which has been used in English by Swinburne and others.]

A TRIOLET ON BEAUTY'S CHARMS.

(From Guillaume de Machault.)

WHITE as the lily, ruddier than the rose,
And shining as the Eastern rubies shine,
In wonder of your peerless beauty's glows,
White as the lily, ruddier than the rose,
My heart keeps watch, such ravishment it knows,
Always to serve you right like lover fine,
White as the lily, ruddier than the rose,
And shining as the Eastern rubies shine.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is one of the finest triolets I know in French. It is quite Celtic; am I far wrong if I say, Mr. Yeats could have written it? The triolet is a species of the rondel.]

A ROUNDEL ON BEAUTY'S CHARMS.

(*From Charles d'Orléans.*)

O GOD ! how good to see her free,
That one so graceful, fair and sweet !
For the great gifts, that in her meet,
From all a ready praise hath she.

Of her a-weary who could be ?
Her beauty ever waxes neat.
O God ! how good to see her free,
That one so graceful, fair and sweet !

Nor hither, nor beyond the sea,
A lady or a lass I weet,
Who in all gifts is so complete.
'Tis but a dream, that thought in me :
O God ! how good to see her free !

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Compare the structure of this roundel with that of Chaucer's "Triple Roundel."]

THE LAY OF PLEASANCE.

(*From Alain Chartier.*)

PLEASANCE most of all maintains
And detains
Who himself contains,
Sustains him graciously.
For, all good she entertains
And contains:
Unto her pertains,
Hence one gains, gay jollity.

What she works for she obtains;
It obtains
That who her retains
Attains to pleasantry.
She the old in life sustains
And maintains.
Who her thoughts contains
Oft gains his dignity.

September, 1908.

[This is given as a specimen of the French riming habit run mad. It may be liked by those who can decipher Mallarmé's poetry!]

AN ODE ON A ROSE.

(*From Ronsard*).

MY darling, come, see if the rose
That in the morning did disclose
Her robe of purple sunward-blown,
Hath lost at all, this fall of night,
The folds of robe with purple dight,
And all her due so like your own.

Alas! see how in little space,
My darling, she hath on the place
Let all her beauty downward glide!
O truly Stepdame Nature's dread,
For such a flower can keep her red
But from the morn till eventide!

Then, if you trust me, darling mine,
While yet thine age doth bloom and shine,
All in its newest freshest green,
O cull, O cull your youthful blowth,
As hath this flower, for age and growth
Will stain your beauty's hue serene.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is the French version of the same story as Herrick's "Counsel to Girls," which begins thus: "Gather ye rose-buds while ye may, Old Time is still a-flying." In our day Mrs. Woods says, quite like a man:

"Youth and jests and summer weather,

These, the best, we miss pursuing
Sullen shades that mock our wooing."]

A BALLADE ON THE VALUE OF HONOUR.

(*From Eustache Deschamps*).

HE who can live his faithful toil upon,
By his own art, or by his income got
Without excess, doth live an honour'd one;
For, all aright his goal of life is raught,
Since he in theft or murder is not caught,
And since he always clings to loyalty,
And ne'er by wrongful means he comes by ought;
Honour's worth more than wealth with infamy.

The faithless rich man, honour may have none,
All in a while his land doth come to nought,
His sin doth make his colour change anon,
So people see the great mistake he wrought;
He dare not go with head raised bare, who wot
His own misdeed; so earthward foolishly
And shamefully like moulted beast he's brought:
Honour's worth more than wealth with infamy.

For when a man some faithless deed hath done,
In streets he shall be pointed out and sought;
And then he only seeks somewhere to run
To hide himself, for he with sin is fraught;
The faithful poor man holds his head full haught,
Fears none, unhurt by foul indignity.
This thing by none should ever be forgot:
Honour's worth more than wealth with infamy.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Observe the construction of this intricate ballade. Contrast this with Falstaff's mock dissertation on Honour in Shakespeare's "Henry IV."]

ANELIDA'S COMPLAINT TO ARCITE.

(*From Chaucer*).

NOW certainly, my sweet, tho' ye
Thus for no cause the cause will be
Of all my dire calamity,
Your manly reason ought to show respite
To slay your friend, and that is me,
That never yet, in no degree,
Offended you, as wisely He,
Who knoweth all, with woe my soul requite!

But as I show'd to you, Arcite,
All that to me men sought to write,
And was so prompt for your delight,
Mine honour save, O meek and kind and free;
Therefore ye put on me the wite,
And do not care for me a mite,
Altho' the sword of sorrow bite
My woful heart all thro' your cruelty!

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Observe the beauty of this single virelay in Chaucer. With regard to the poetry of it, Shakespeare has touched this string many times, to say nothing of a world of novelists.]

CHAUCER'S APPEARANCE.

(From Chaucer).

WHEN said all this wonder, ev'ry man
So sober grew, 'twas wonderful to see,
Until our host to crack his jests began,
And then at first he cast his look on me,
And thus he said: "What man art thou?" said he;
"Thou lookest as if thou wouldst find a hare,
For, ever on the ground I see thee stare.

"Approach thou near, and merrily look high.
Now take care, sirs, and let this man have place;
He in the waist is shaped as well as I;
This were a puppet in an arm to embrace
For any woman, small and fair of face.
He seems all eery in his countenance,
For, to no person does he dalliance.

"Say something now, since other folk have said;
Tell us a tale of mirth and that anon."
"Host," said I, "do not be discomfited;
For, other tale I certainly know none,
A rime I learnt, a long time since is gone."
"Yes, that is good," said he; "now we shall hear
Some fine thing, as may by his face appear."

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Compare this description with the line, "Since I, from Love escaping, am so fat." Probably these two passages inspired the following lines of Mr. Owen Seaman:

"O profuse and imposing and passive,
O dame of the devious waist,
Whose circuit, amorphous and massive,
These arms could never have embraced."]

THE RIME OF SIR THOPAS.

(From Chaucer).

NOW list ye, sirs, with right good heed,
And I will tell a tale, indeed,
Of mirth and of delight;
There was a knight of right good breed,
In fray and tourney bold of deed,
Sir Thopas was he hight.

In far-off country born was he,
In Flanders, all beyond the sea,
At Popering, that's the place;
His father was a man full free,
And of that country lord was he,
As it was Heaven's grace.

Sir Thopas grew a valiant knight,
Like the Lord's bread his face was white,
His lips were red as rose;
His hue like scarlet dye was bright,
And I do tell you all aright,
He had a seemly nose.

His hair, his beard were saffron-brown,
That to his girdle reach'd adown,
His shoes were of Cordwane,
His hosen brown of Bridges town,
His robe was made of ciclatoun,
That cost him many a jane.

He well could hunt what deer soever,
And ride a-hawking on the river,
With Goshawk gray in hand;
Besides, he was a marksman clever
At wrestling rivals had he never,
Where any ram might stand.

Full many a maid in chamber bright
Did mourn for him, their love, at night
When they had better sleep;
But he was chaste, no lecher light,
And sweet as bramble-flower is dight,
That bears the ruddy heap.

And so it fell upon a day,
For very sooth, as I may say,
Sir Thopas had a ride;
He was upon his stallion gay,
And in his hand a lance did sway,
A long sword by his side.

He rode out thro' a forest fair,
Wherein wild beasts full many were,
Yes, buck, and hare as well;
And, riding north and east out there,
I tell it you, a sorry care
Well-nigh upon him fell.

Herbs great and small there did not fail,
The liquorice, and setwall pale,
And many a clove's array;
And nutmeg too, to put in ale,
Whether it be all moist or stale,
Or in a box to lay.

The birds did sing, you can't say nay,
The sparrow-hawk and popinjay,
That it was joy to hear;
The song-thrush also made his lay,
The wood-pigeon upon the spray
Did sing full loud and clear.

Sir Thopas 'gan for love to long,
Just when he heard the thrush's song,
And all in madness rode;
His stallion fair, for riding strong,
So sweated, that he might be wrung,
His sides with blood o'erflow'd.

Sir Thopas was so tired and hot
For riding on the grassy plot,
So fierce was he in mood,
That down he laid him on the spot,
To give his stallion rest he sought,
And gave him forage good.

"Blest Mary! benedicite!
What ailing brings this love on me
To bind me down so sore?
God! visions I this night did see,
An elf-queen shall my darling be,
And sleep beneath my gore.

"An elf-queen will I love, that's it!
For in this world no woman's fit
A wife for me to make
In town;
All other women I forsake,
And to an elf-queen I betake
My steps by dale and down."

[Here I am "stinted of" the Tale of Sir Thopas.]

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—See the good-humoured tediousness of this poem. Chaucer was not "stinted of" the Tale till after a few more similar verses. Michael Drayton imitates this in his "Ballad of Dowsabel," and refers to this in his "Nymphidia."]

TIRESOME WRITINGS.

(From Juvenal).

EVER am I but a hearer ? and never am I to revenge me,
Plagued so oft with the jarring of Codrus' "Story of Theseûs ?"
Scot-free, then, this one is to read to me comedies, that one
Elegies ? all scot-free is my day to be wasted by bulky
"Telephus," or, scribbled on the margin of volume completed,
Written as well on the back, nor still quite ended, "Orestes ?"
Better is no one aware of his own house than I of Mars's
Arbour, and eke of the cave, near unto Æolian mountains,
Vulcan keeps; what's done by the winds, what spirits are crush'd by
Æacus, whence doth another abscond with the cleverly stolen
Gold of the fleece, what huge rowans down Monycus tumble,
Fronto's arbour of planes, and his marbles, shaken, do echo
Ever, his columns as well, out-split by the sedulous reader.
Look for the same, same themes from the least and the greatest of poets.
Still it was I, who my hand from the cane drew back, it was I, too,
Once gave Sulla advice that he should full soundly in private
Slumber; it were but a mercy insane, when around me so many

Inspired poets I meet, to be chary of perishing paper.
Still why rather I choose to career right over the regions
Thro' where Aurunca's great fosterling tended his coursers,
Should ye have leisure, and calmly allow sheer reason,
I'll tell you.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Fronto was a great patron of poetasters. Lucilius, the father of Roman satirists, was a native of Aurunca.]

THE FROGS.

(From the Rigveda).

FOR one whole year they lay adown,
Those Brahmans that fulfil their vows,
Their voice Parjanya hath inspired,
The frogs have utter'd forth a speech.

What time the heavenly waters come upon them,
As on a dried-up skin in pool a-lying,
Then, like the sound of kine with calves beside them,
The music of the Frogs comes here in concert.

When at their yearning falls the rain upon them
While thirsty at the rainy season's advent,
Out-crying, as a son doth greet his father,
One seeks another as that other speaks up.

Each of these twain receives the other kindly,
While at the flow of waters they do revel;
What time the Frog bedew'd with rain springs forward,
Spotty combines with Green his voice in concert.

When one of these the language of the other
Repeats, as he that learns doth of the teacher,
Their ev'ry limb doth seem to be increasing,
As with good voice ye spake upon the waters.

Cow-bellow here is one, Goat-bleat another,
Spotty is one, and Green is one among them;
One common name they bear, and yet they vary;
In many ways their voice they've form'd, a-speaking.

Like Brahmans at the Soma-rite of Atiratra
Around the brimful vessel making speeches,
Upon that first day of the year ye gather,
What time, O Frogs, the rainy day is come up

The Brahmans with the Soma have made speeches,
Performing all their yearly rites of prayer;
The Adhvaryus, full of summer and a-sweating,
Come forth to view, and none of them are hidden.

They have observed the twelvemonth's godly order;
The season by these men is not neglected;
When once a year the rainy season cometh,
The heated summer'd ones acquire their freedom.

Cow-bellow now hath given, Goat-bleat hath given,
Spotty hath given, Green hath given us riches;
The Frogs, bestowing on us kine in hundreds,
Prolong our lives at this most fertile season.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Atiratra means "over-night wassail." The interpretation of this apparently satiric hymn is difficult; see Macdonell's "History of Sanskrit Literature." The text should be read with the help of Grassman's "Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda."]

THE MERRY MONK.

(*From Chaucer*).

A MONK there was, above all excellent,
One fond of riding out, on hunting bent,
A manly man, to be an abbot able.
Full many a well-fed steed he had in stable:
And, when he rode, his bridle you could hear
A-jingling in a whistling wind as clear
And quite as loud as did the Chapel-bell,
There where this lord was prior of the cell.
The rule of Saint Maur or Saint Benedict,—
Since it was very old and somewhat strict,—
This monk let go such olden things apace,
And held in mode of modern world his race.
He gave not for that text a plume-pluck'd hen,
That says, that hunters are not holy men;
Nor that one, where a monk, when cloisterless,
Is liken'd to a fish, when waterless;
That is to say, a monk out of his cloister.
And that same text he held not worth an oyster:;
And I did say, his view was not so bad.
Why should he read, and drive himself all mad,
Upon a book in cloister always pore,
Or toil with hands, or labour o'er and o'er,
As Austin bids? How shall the world be served?
Let Austin have his toil to him reserved.
Therefore he was a rider hard and right;
Greyhounds he had, as swift as birds in flight;
In riding and in hunting of the hare
Was all his pleasure; costs he would not spare.

I saw his sleeves well purfled at the hand
With rich gray fur, the finest of the land;
And, to keep fast his hood beneath his chin,
He had, prepared with gold, a well-wrought pin:
A loop-knot in the larger end there was.
His head was bald, and shone as any glass;
And eke, as tho' anointed, shone his face.
He was a lord full fat and in good case;
His eyes were bright, and rolling in his head,
And shone like furnance of a kitchen-lead;
His boots were soft, his steeds in good array.
Now certainly he was a prelate gay;
He was not pallid like a tortured ghost.
A fat swan loved he best of any roast.
His palfrey was as brown as is a berry

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—What a naïve satiric humour was Chaucer's!]

THE RAVAGES OF GRENDEL.

(From "Beowulf.")

THEN came from the moorland, under mist-mountains,
Grendel going; God's ire he bore.
Meant the man-scather out of mortals
Some one to capture in high-built castle;
Went under welkin, till he the wine-mansion,
Gold-hall of warriors, found all garnish'd,
Fairly furnish'd; 'twas not the foremost time
That he Hrothgar's home did visit.
Not in his life ever, earlier or after,
Hardier heroes, hall-thanes he found!
Came he to the mansion, man wandering.
Cut off from comfort; off came the door,
Fire-bounden fast, when with his hand 'twas felt.

September, 1908.

[NOTE—This is the central part of the story of Beowulf.]

THE WRATH OF GOD.

(From the so-called Cædmon.)

I WILL with deluge drown the people,
And ev'ry kind of living creatures,
That the air and flood feed and carry,
Birds and cattle; thou shalt find quiet,
With sons and children, when the swart waters,
Dark death-rivers, drown the people,
Wrongful wretches. Go work a wide vessel,
Mighty sea-house, on which thou for many shalt
Find a rest-room, and right good seat,
Each after the kind of earthly creatures

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—There is a majestic swing in this passage about Noah's flood. It is curious to note that the Indian, Greek and Roman mythology we find references to some great Deluge in the past. Besides this physical Deluge, who knows how many religious, moral and intellectual deluges have passed over the world?]

THE PEASANT REVOLT.

(From Wace.)

HE had as yet but hardly reign'd,
Nor had he yet his dukedom gain'd,
When in the land a war arose,
Which to the earth much ill should cause.
The peasant and the villain breed,
Those from the woods and those from mead,—
I know not at whose luring word,
Nor by whom they were first bestirr'd,—
By twenties, thirties, hundreds all
Did hold discussions several.
They go advising such a speech
That, if their end they can but reach,
If they can execute their plan,
'Twill be against the wealthy man.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—The interest of Wace's "Brut" is mainly antiquarian. But this passage has a deeper significance: it shows the first growth of the popular spirit of freedom in this country. Remember in our day the Labour Party and the Socialists. Who knows what Divine mission they may yet fulfil?]

THE TALE OF BRITAIN, LL. 1—11.

(From Layamon.)

A PRIEST was in the country, Layamon they call'd him:
Loving to him may God be: he was Leovenath's offspring;
He lived at Ernley, at church so lordly,
On shores of the Severn—good it beseem'd him—
Hard by Radestone; there his books read he.
It came to his mind and in his chief musings,
That he would of the English narrate the exploits,
What name they were call'd by, and where they came from,
Who the English country first did come by,
After the deluge, the dire sending of God,
That left here nothing found to be living.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is a mythic chronicle rather than an epic. But an epic is wanted: could Rudyard Kipling write it?]

THE BOOKLET OF ORM, LL. 1—16.

(*From Orm.*)

NOW, brother Walter, brother mine,
After the flesh's kind;
And brother mine in Christendom
Thro' christening and thro' truth;
And brother mine in house of God,
Yet in the manner third,
Because we two have taken both
A rule-book for our guide,
Under canonic hood and life,
So as Saint Austin set;
So have I done as thou didst bid,
And further'd thee thy will,—
I've render'd into English speech
The Gospel's holy lore,
With that small wit which unto me
My Gracious Lord hath lent.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—The interest of this poem is more philological than poetical. Notice, however, the absence of rime and the regularity of accent.]

ISAAC AND ESAU.

(*From the Cursor Mundi.*)

SO much hath age now Isaac led,
That he in languor lies in bed;
He lacks of sight, I told you all,
And on Esau he did call.
"Esau, darling son," he said,
"Go, see thy tackle be purvey'd,
And strive to run the saw full near,
That thou mayst deeply strike me here;
If in my flesh a gash thou make,
Gladly would I thereof partake.
Darling son, full gladly thou
Hast done thy father's will till now;
'Mongst shooters thou art very good,
Both in field and in the wood."

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Notice the regularity of accent and the introduction of rime in this poem.]

THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

(*From Robert of Gloucester.*)

THUS came the English land into the Norman hand,
And then the Normans could not speak aught else but their own speech,
And spoke French as they did at home, and their children so did teach;
So that the great men of this land, who of their blood were sprung,
Hold all the self-same speech, that they took from their tongue;
For, unless a man knows French, small honour doth he get,
But lowly men to English hold, and to their own language yet.
I fancy that in all the world there may be countries none
That do not hold to their own speeeh, save England all alone.
But, men are well aware, to know both speeches well it is,
For, the more a man doth know, worth all the more he is.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Here we see the old English and the Norman streams uniting to form the great river of English literature. Side by side with this we see the formation of the great river of the English nation.]

THE VOYAGE OF THE TROJANS.

(From Robert Manning of Bourne.)

WHAT time the Trojans were all dight
With sail upon the mast upright,
With anchor, oar and other ware,
And they were ready all to fare,
When well to them the wind was lent,
They took their leave, and forth they went.
When they to sail did all prepare,
Three hundred ships were counted there
And four besides, so goes the tale,
When from the Gregeys they did sail.
Two days they sail'd, and evenings twain,
But land nor haven could they gain;
The third day in the eventide,
In Leogise they gan to ride.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Robert Manning closely imitated Wace in the first half of his "Chronicle," from which this extract is taken. This suggests a theme for the future Æneid of England.]

THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

(*From Master Nicholas.*)

THE nightingale upon this word
Was well-nigh out of patience stirr'd,
And thought all eager in her mood,
If something else she understood,
If she could anything but sing,
That might have help'd the other thing.
To this an answer she must find,
Or altogether be behind,
And it is very hard to fight
What's very true and very right.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This poem is the first example in English of a contest in verse.

A MORAL ODE.

FULL often God doth thank him more, that giveth to Him less;
For, all His works and all His gifts they are in righteousness.
A little gift is dear to God, that cometh of good will;
He little gives for mickle vow, when all the heart is ill.
Both heaven and earth He oversees, His eyes are e'er so bright,
And sun and moon and heaven and fire are gloom against His light.
To Him is nothing dark or hid, so much He hath of might;
There is no deed in darkness done, in e'er so dark a night,
He knows the thought, and knows the deed, of ev'ry living wight.
There is no lord like Christ, no king such as our Saviour right.
Both heaven and earth and all that is are lock'd up in His hand;
He does whate'er He wills to do on water and on land.
He made the fishes in the sea, the fowl upon the air.
He guards and governs all that is, and shaped all creatures fair.
He was the first of all that is, and will be without end;
His presence is in ev'ry place, whichever way we wend.
He is above, and is below, before us and behind;
The man who works the will of God, Him ev'rywhere may find.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—There is a splendid swing in every line of this didactic ode: it not only teaches, but also pleases.]

A GHASEL ON WORLDLY WISDOM.

(*From Leuthold.*)

WITH men too moral bear I not:
For such a rabble care I not.
Their calumny I give not back:
With such a weapon dare I not.
But were the sword of wit to flash,
Then such a battle fear I not.
I always go mine own, own way:
My deeds with tears repair I not.
A cup of wine, a lovely girl:
For all the others care I not.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Notice the beauty of the ghasel, a metre of Persian origin. Compare the following lines from Fitz-Gerald's "Omar Khayyam":

"Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring
The Winter Garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To fly—and Lo! the bird is on the wing."

Compare also Richard Le Gallienne's lines:

"Nay! think no more, but grip the slender waist."]

LOVE LOCKED UP.

THOU mine own,
I thine own :
This to thee
Should be known.
Shut up thou art
Within my heart :
Lost is now the little key :
Thou must ever in it be.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—There are hundreds of such gems in German literature; see a few of them in Max Müller's "German Texts."]

LOVE NOT TO BE BETRAYED.

SACRED yearning—it is good ;
It can give a lofty mood.
For it shall he ask,
Who with truth doth keep it not :
He shall be brought to task.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—There is a modern German version of this in Max Müller's "German Texts."]

LOVE UNDER THE LINDEN-TREE.

(*From Walther von der Vogelweide.*)

UNDER the linden-tree,
On the plain,
Where for us twain a bed there was,
There may ye look and see,
Nice the twain,
Sprent bloom of flowers and wither'd grass.
By the forest in a vale,
Hey ding-a-ding!
Nicely sang the nightingale.

I came as I did wend
To the lea,
My lover there was come before.
There as his girl and friend
Took he me,
So I am happy evermore.
Kiss'd he me? A thousandfold!
Hey ding a-ding!
Wax'd how red my face, behold.

There he had made erewhile,
Richly dight,
A bed with bloom or blossoms wrought;
To think of it we smile
In our sprite.
Should anyone come to that spot,
By the roses well he may,
Hey ding a-ding!
Mark where intertwined we lay.

That he by me did lie,
Might one know—
Forbid it God—so shames it me.
What he with me did try,
No one, oh,
Shall ever know, but I and he,
And a pretty birdling fair,
Hey ding-a-ding!
That can keep its faith for e'er.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—This is the most melodious love-song in Vogelweide.]

GRITTY'S SONG

(*From Goethe.*)

MY repose is gone,
My heart is sore,
I shall find that never
And nevermore.

If I have him not,
The grave I've got;
The world is all
To me but gall.

My piteous head
Is all too rack'd,
My piteous sense
Is all too crack'd.

My repose is gone,
My heart is sore;
I shall find that never
And nevermore.

To see him only
From window I dart,
To see him only
Out I start.

His lofty gait,
His stature so high,
And his mouth in laughter,
And the power of his eye,

And eke his speech's
Magic flow,
His clasp of hand,
And kisses—oh!

My repose is gone,
My heart is sore,
I shall find that never
And nevermore.

My bosom urged
Towards him goes;
Ah, might I clasp him
And hold him close!

And kiss him too,
As much I would;
Upon his kisses
Expire I should!

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Every line of this beautifully constructed song has the power to touch a chord in our hearts.]

BEATRICE.

(*From Dante*).

THERE m.....g had been made, and evening here,
Almost by yonder pass; and all was white
That half, and black the other half of sphere,
When Beatricè on the left did light;
I saw her roll'd, and at the sun agaze;
An eagle ne'er so fixt on it her sight.
And as a second ray is wont to blaze
From out the first, and up to rearise,
Like pilgrim who would fain his steps retrace,
So from her action, molten thro' the eyes
In mine imagination, mine I caught,
And fixt eyes sunward in unwonted guise.
There much is lawful quite, that here is not
Unto our powers, by virtue of the place
Especial for the human species wrought.
Not long I bore it, nor so short a space,
But I beheld it sparkle forth and turn,
As iron melting comes from fire apace.
And suddenly it seem'd that morn to morn
Was added, as if He Who hath the might
Did with another sun the heaven adorn.
All Beatricè stood with fixèd sight
Upon the wheel etern, and I on her
Did fix my look, far sunder'd from the height;
So at her aspect inly did I veer,
As Glaucus did on tasting of the herb
That made him all the other sea-gods' peer.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—If to be linked inseparably with an immortal be immortality, what a glorious immortality is Beatricè's! Is it much inferior to Sappho's?]

THE YOUNG WIDOW.

(From La Fontaine).

A HUSBAND lost ne'er goes without a sigh of pain :
One makes a lot of noise, and then forgets one's woe,
Upon the wings of Time, away the sorrows go :
Time brings the pleasures back again.
Between a year-long widow gay
And the sad widow of a day
The difference is great : you never would suppose
That 'twas the self-same person now ;
The one makes people flee, great charms the other shows :
Of sighs, sincere or false, that one doth take her vow ;
'Tis always the same note, the same discourse for e'er.
They say that consolations fail :
They say so, but there's nothing there,
As you shall see by this my tale,
Or rather by the truth more strong.

The husband of a beauty young
Left for the other world. All by his side his wife
Cried to him : " Wait for me, I follow thee ; my life,
Is ready, like thine own, away from hence to go."
The husband wends his way alone.
The fair one had a sire, a man for prudence known :
He let her sorrow's torrent flow :
And at the last, to soothe her woe,
" My girl," he said to her, " too much of tears you shed :
Ah, wherefore should you drown your sweet charms for the dead ?
Since there are living men, think of the dead no more.

I do not say, some early day
A happier condition may
In wedding change these yearnings sore;
But when some time is past, then to you let me bring
A husband fair, well-made, young, ev'ry other thing
Like your dead husband." "Ah!" as soon said she,
"A cloister is the spouse for me."
Her father lets her brook her fortune's evil grace.
A month like that doth go apace.
The next month, she's employ'd in changing ev'ry day
Something about the dress, the linen, or her hair;
The mourning serves for show full fair,
Awaiting other costumes gay.
Then all the Loves in their array
To the dove-cot return; the Games, the Smiles, the Ball,
Have also at their last turn:
There is a rush both eve and morn
Into the Fount of Youth to fall.
The father fears no more that cherish'd husband dead;
But as he nothing spake unto our lady gay,
"Where's now the husband young," she said,
"That you did promise me, I pray?"

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—I almost see the sly poet laughing in his sleeve behind this delightful poem.]

THE TWO MARRIED WOMEN AND THE WIDOW.

(From Dunbar).

UPON the Midsummer evening, merriest of nights,
I moved forth alone, near as midnight was past,
Beside a goodly green garth, full of gay flowers.
Hedged, of a huge height, with hawthorn trees;
Whereon a bird on a branch so burst out in notes
That never a blither bird upon the bough was heard;
What thro' the sugar'd sound of her glad song,
And thro' the wholesome savour of the sweet flowers,
I drew at dusk to the ditch to lurk after joys;
The dew drench'd the dale, and ding'd the birds.

I heard, under a holly heavenly green-hued,
A high speech at my hand, with haughty words;
Thereat in haste to the hedge so hard I press'd in,
That I was held by the hawthorn and by handsome leaves;
Thro' prickles of plaited thorn I presently lookt,
If any person would approach me in that pleasant garden

I saw three ladies sit in a green arbour,
All gay with garlands of fresh goodly flowers;
So glitter'd, as they were gold, their glorious gilt tresses,
While all the grass did gleam with the glad hues;
Comb'd was their clear hair, and carefully shed
About their shoulders sheer down, shining full bright,
With kerchiefs, cast above them, of crape clear and thin;
Their mantles were green as the grass that grew in May season,

Fasten'd with their white fingers about their fair sides;
Of 'wonderful fine features were their faces meek,
All full of flowering beauty, as flowers in June;
White, seemly, and soft, as the sweet lilies,
Newly spread on the spray; as newly blossom'd rose,
Array'd royally about with much rich verdure,
That Nature full nobly enamell'd with flowers
Of ev'ry hue under heaven that any expert knew;
Fragrant, all full of fresh odour, finest of smell.
A marble table cover'd there was before these three ladies,
With royal cups in rows full of rich wines:
And, of these fair women, two were wedded to lords,
One was a widow, I wot, wanton of manners.
And, as they talk'd at the table many a tale invented,
They watch'd the strong wine, and warr'd with words;
And then they spake more speedily, and spared no topics.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Oh, the proverbial garrulity of females! In the older Edda the habit extends even to goddesses:

"Soon the gods were gather'd in council,
And goddesses given to speeches."

Dunbar's alliterative verses compare unfavourably with Langland's in point of true melody, but the beauty of his imagery makes up for this defect.]

KING HEART.

(From Douglas).

KING Heart, within his comely castle strong
Enclosed about with craft and mighty care,
So seemly was he set his folk among,
No dread he had of dire misfortune there;
So proudly was he polish'd, plain, and fair,
With youth and all his lusty life so green;
So fair, so fresh, so likely to last e'er,
And eke so blithe as bird in summer sheen.

For, he was never yet with showers shot,
Nor yet o'errun with mist or any rain;
In all his beauteous body not a spot;
He never had experience of pain,
But pleasure evermore, to tell you plain;
Only to love and perfect gentleness
Inclined he was, full clearly to remain
And bide beneath the wing of wantonness.

And yet this worthy King was under ward,
And he was not at perfect liberty.
Nature had order'd folk for their reward
This goodly King to govern carefully;
And so they used their time full warily
In winning wealth; and him they wish'd to teach
All lusts to love and serve full loyally;
And privily they praised him and did preach.

First Strength, then Carnal Bliss, and Wantonness,
Raw Lust, Free Frolic, Envy, Jealousy,
Fresh Greed, New Fashion, Waste, and Wilfulness,
Foolhardiness, and eke Agility,

Praise, Freedom, Secret Watch, and Courtesy,
Vainglory, Folly, and Improvidence,
Unrest, Nightwalk, and Wicked Gluttony,
Dim Sight, Wrongdoing, Sleight, and Subtle Sense

These were the inner servants, busy e'er,
The constant guardians of this noble King;
They kept him all inclined unto their care;
So there was not on earth a single thing
That one of these away from home might bring.
Thus to their terms they served for their reward,
With dancing, sporting, singing, revelling,
All blithe, their business but to please the lord.

These folk, with all the household at their call,
Whose number was one million and still more,
Who were for long uprear'd as servants all,
To share this king's good luck and fortune sore,
For favour nor for food would leave his door,
Unto the time their date be run and past:
Nor gold nor goods could make them give him o'er,
Nor grief nor pain should make them so aghast

Five servants also had this King without,
Who were taught always treason to espy;
They ever watch'd the walls all round about
For foemen that might happen to come by:
One for the day, who judged full certainly
To ken with care the colour of all hue;
One for the night, who harken'd readily
Out of what air the winds for ever blew.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—I admire Douglas's ken into "the abysmal deeps of personality" which Tennyson mentions in his "Palace of Art."]

THE POOR MAN AND THE PARDONER.

(*From Sir David Lyndsay*).[1]

(*Shoemaker*).

WELCOME home, Robert Rome-raker,
Our holy patent pardoner!
If you have dispensation
To part me and my wicked wife,
And make me free from pain and strife,
I make you supplication.

(*Pardoner*).

I'll part you, but I more demand,
So I get money in my hand:
Therefore, some coin let see.

(*Shoemaker*).

I have no silver, by my life!
But shillings five, and a shaping knife:
That shall you have full free.

(*Pardoner*).

What kind of woman is thy wife?

(*Shoemaker*).

A living Devil, a storm of strife.

September, 1908.[7]

[NOTE.—Lyndsay was the first great satirist of Scotland. Scott pays a tribute to him in his "Marmion."]

LITTLE HAVELOK AND OLD GRIM.

(From the Lay of Havelok the Dane).

"GOD knows!" quoth Grim, "this is our heir
Who shall reign in Denmark long;
He shall be a king full strong;
He shall hold within his hand
All Denmark and the English land;
Goddard he to woe shall drive,
Shall hang or flay him all alive,
Or give him soon a living grave,
And him no mercy then shall save."
So said Old Grim, and wept full sore,
And soon he fell his feet before,
And said: "My lord, have mercy thou
On me and Leve beside me now.
Thine, my lord, we both shall be,
We thy servants true to thee.
Thee, my lord, full well we'll feed,
Till thou canst ride upon a steed,
Till thou with perfect ease canst bear
Helm on head, and shield and spear.
He shall never, surely, know,—
Goddard, who betray'd thee so.
Lord, thro' other man than thee
Never shall I freeman be.
Thou shalt make me free, my lord,
For I shall keep thee watch and ward:
Thro' thee will I my freedom gain."

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Is not old Grim like old Adam in Shakespeare's 'You Like It"?]

HORN AND RIMENHILD.

(*From the Gest of King Horn*)

HE went his way aright
To Rimenhild the bright;
On his knees he fell,
And greeted her full well.
Thro' his beauteous might
All the bower grew bright.
He spake a beauteous speech,
And no one him might teach
"Well thou sittest mild,
Rimenhild, King's child,
With thy six maidens free,
Seated near to thee.
By the steward taught,
Here thy bower I sought;
With thee must I speak;
Whatso thou dost seek,
Tell me; I shall still
Listen to thy will."
Up Rimenhild did stand,
And took him by the hand;
On a cloth she placed
Wine to fill his taste;
Him joyous she did make,
And by the neck did take.
Often him she kiss'd,
So well as she did list.

"Horn," said she, "without strife,
Me shalt thou take to wife;
Horn, on me have ruth,
And pledge to me thy truth."

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—The Gest of King Horn is a typical romance of the Teutonic and Anglo-Danish cycle in French reproduced in Middle English.]

LUCRETIAN PLEASURE.

(From Lucretius).

SWEET, on the sea all vasty the winds agitating the levels,
Safely from land to behold some other's terrible danger;
Not that it is a delight and a pleasure that any be troubled,
But it is sweet to espy what ills thou happily scapest!
Fairly array'd on the field, wherein thou sharest no peril,
Sweet it is also to eye and to note great struggles of battle;
But nought sweeter is there, than to hold full firmly the strongholds,
Raised full high by the lore of the wise, those peaceable temples,
Whence thou canst look down on the others, and notice them widely
Roving, and going astray in the search of a tenour of living,
Vying with power of wit, contending with order and title,
Striving by day and by night with a mighty and wonderful effort
Ever to rise to the summit of wealth and be wielders of all things!

September, 1908.

[*Note.—How powerful are the last seven lines! If this is Lucretian pleasure, what must have been the Shakesperian pleasure, to coin a phrase!* Shakespeare not only "looked down on the others," he also looked into them: and we can only imagine each for oneself how much of us Shakespeare saw! Remember the testimony of Ben Jonson, Milton, Matthew Arnold, and Swinburne. Than to hold firmly the strongholds—The original is: "bene quam munita tenere"; Munro translates: "than to hold the . . . positions well fortified." I prefer to take "bene" with "tenere."]

GOOD AND BAD THOUGHTS.

(*From the Dhammapada*).

OUR natures all proceed from thought,
In thought they lie, all thought they are;
If with a thought with evil fraught
Or words or deeds one doth unbar,
Then one by pain is chased and sought,
As is the best by wheel of car.

Our natures all proceed from thought,
In thought they lie, all thought they are;
If with a thought with goodness fraught
Or words or deeds one doth unbar,
Then one by bliss is chased and sought,
As by one's shadow going far.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Observe the construction of these twin sestets. There is a fine prose translation of the Dhammapada by Max Müller.

DEOR'S LAMENT.

(From an Old English lyric.)

WELAND thro' many wot a vengeance,
Firm-minded man, miseries bore,
Had for companions pain and longing,
Winter-cold vengeance: woe oft he found,
When on him Nithad did lay a need-wound,
Grievous gashes giving the man
That was gone thro', this too so may!

Beadohild was not, for her brother's death,
In soul so sore as for her injured self,
That she patiently had experienced,
That she offspring bore: ever she could not
Think of her trouble, how she must take it.
That was gone thro', this too so may!

We of Hild's honour much have hearken'd;
Grew unfathom'd the Goth's misfortune,
That his sore longing robb'd him of sleep.
That was gone thro', this too so may!

Theodoric bided thirty winters
'Midst Mærings' town: that to many was known.
That was gone thro', this too so may!

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—The reading here adopted is that of Wülcker's edition of Grein's "Bibliothek der Angelsächsischen Poesie": the text should be read with the help of Grein's "Sprachschatz der Angelsächsischen Dichter" and Bosworth's and Toller's "Anglo-Saxon Dictionary." This is the only poem in Old English in strophic form, with a refrain.]

ADAM AND EVE.

(From the Old Saxon Genesis

AH now, Eve, thou hast," quoth Adam, " mark'd out for evil
Our living selves. Now mayst thou see this swarthy hell
Gape greedily ; now thou her ghastly din
Hence mayst hearken ; never heaven-land is
Like hell-place loathsome ; that was of all lands sheenest,
That we thro' our Househead's grace might have held yet ;
There Him thou heardst not, Who to us this harm forbade,
So we the World-Ruler's word frustrated,
Heaven's King's orders."

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—The relation of the Old English Genesis "B" to the Old Saxon Genesis is a highly interesting point; see Kögel's "Geschichte der Deutschen Litteratur" and Braune's "Bruchstücke" together with Sievers' "Der Heliand und die Angelsächsische Genesis."]

A FALLEN MAN AND A FALLEN WOMAN.

(From Propertius

OFT as a blame at my door thou layest my longing for pleasure:
Trust me, on you, ladies, mightier power it wields.
Once ye have hated and broken asunder the bridle of honour,
Then no limits ye know unto the madness of mind.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Those verses sum up the whole difference between the sexes.]

A SATIRE ON DRUNKEN FROLICS.

(From Varro).

AJAX then doth think, with a sword he is cutting Ulysses,
When in his rage thro' woods he is rushing and butchering porkers.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—It is highly interesting to note that the Greek satirist Menippos of Gadara was imitated first by Lucian in his "Σπουδογελαῖος Μένιππος," then by Varro in his "Satyrae Menippeae," from which the present extract is taken, and lastly by the French authors of "La Satyre Ménippée." For a description of the nature of this kind of satire, see Teuffel's "History of Roman Literature" and Henri Van Laun's "History of French Literature."]

THE POET'S IMMORTALITY.

(*From Horace*).

I'VE rear'd a monument, more lasting far than brass,
And more than kingly site of pyramids sublime,
Which neither biting rain, nor powerless blast of North,
May cause to tumble down, nor all the numberless
Succession of the years, and all the seasons' flight.
I shall not wholly die; a mighty part of me
Shall scape the burial. Full oft in future folk's
Praise shall I be renew'd, whiles up the Capitol,
Led by the holy maid all silent, climbs the priest.
I shall be named, where sounds the rapid Aufidus,
And where, all poorly bless'd with water, Daunus ruled
Over a rustic folk, I raised from low degree,
As one who first did lead Æolian verses on
To sweet Italian tunes. Assume the lofty pride
Thy worth hath sought and found, and with the Delphic bays
Entwine me willingly, O mournful Muse, my hair.

September, 1908.

[Note.—Nothing is so charming as this self-conceit of one whom posterity has declared to be immortal.]

THE POETASTER'S MADNESS.

(*From Persius*).

(*Persius*).

THOU, old man, dost find a repast for the hearing of others ?
Hearing, to which thou mayst say, bursting with vanity, "Hold now" !

(*The Adversary*).

What was thy lore for, unless this leaven, and flowering fig-tree,
Once deep-rooted in thee, could burst thro' thy liver and shoot forth ?

(*Persius*).

Look at thy wanness and age ! Oh manners ! Nothing at all, then,
Nothing thy knowledge, unless it be known to another, thou knowest ?

(*The Adversary*).

But it is fine to be shown with the finger and named with a "Here's he !"
Thou by a full hundred curl'd heads wert studied and got up,
This thou reckest at nought ?

(*Persius*).

Look, over their goblets they ask you,
Romulus' folk well-fill'd, what's told in the heavenly poems.
Here some one, with a close hyacinthine raiment on shoulders,

Some song musty and rank thro' a nose that snuffles a-speaking,
Phyllises, Hypsipeles, eke any lamentable poem,
Sputters forth, and with soft palate full trippingly mumbles.
Heroes have whisper'd assent; now are not ashes of poet
Blest? and a tomb-stone's weight is it not less heavy on dry-bones?
Guests assembled applaud: now out of his whimpering shadow,
Now all out of his tomb, eke out of his fortunate ashes,
Will not violets spring?

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—I prefer this cutting satire of Persius to the "Dunciad" of Pope.]

THE POET'S KINDRED SOUL.

(From Bhavabhuti).

WHOEVER they may be, that spread my name in deep despite,
Somehow they know that for their sake this effort is not meant ;
There will arise, there is some person with a kindred sprite,
For, Time is limitless, and very wide the Earth's extent.

September, 1908.

[NOTE.—Time and the Earth have found Bhavabhuti many a kindred soul; he has been given the second place in the Sanskrit drama. He is to Kalidasa what Ben Johnson is to Shakespeare; and the parallelism is significant, as he was "all steeped in learning."]

STRAY NOTES OF MINE OWN.

O SPRICH mir nicht von jener bunten Menge,
Bei deren Anblick uns der Geist entflieht.
Verhülle mir das wogende Gedränge,
Das wider Willen uns zum Strudel zieht.
Nein, führe mich zur stillen Himmelsenge,
Wo nur dem Dichter reine Freude blüht;
Wo Lieb' und Freundschaft unsres Herzens Segen
Mit Götterhand erschaffen und erpflegen.

(*Goethe*).

(O tell me not of yonder many gleaming,
Upon whose sight our spirit takes to flight.
Hide from my view the crowd in billows streaming,
That forces us unto the eddy right.
No, lead me to the stilly nook redeeming,
Where round the poet blooms a pure delight;
Where Love and Friendship for our hearts a blessing
With godly hand still shape and keep caressing.)

THE OLD FORTRESS.

(Homeric Rhythms).

HERE is the old fortress; the remains of a town and the ruins
Left by a lone rampart, long centuries old, yet amazing,
Yet with a beauty serene exposing the hand of the workers,
Lie in a heap, in a crumbled heap, half-hid in the twilight.
Down from a deep rock-hollow the full-foamed thundering river
Falls, and in woful accord makes plaint with the querulous woodlands.

Here is the old fortress; but alas for the hearts that upon it
Fought for their own hearth-stone and the hallow'd dwelling of fathers,
Fought but to suffer and sicken and labour and die to the last man!
Ah for the old fortress, cherish'd by the perishing warriors,
Razed to the dust, to the thankless dust, by the ruffian *forces!*
Never, O never again, may be seen such a ghastly enaction!

May, 1900.

THE ROSE.

(*A triolet.*)

IS it a' for nocht, for nocht,
That I lo'e thee, rosie
O thy lips o' lurid hue
Gleamin', glowrin' wi' the dew
That upo' them sits anew,
Mind me o' my Posie!
Is it a' for nocht, for nocht,
That I lo'e thee, rosie?

June, 1901.

THE REFUSAL.

I SPAK to her, " O be na stirr'd,
My ain, my winsome dearie "
I spak to her, " O tell me, fair,
Why looks' thou unco' weary ? "
But Meg she utter'd nót a word,
But Meg she gi'ed no blushin'
On face and cheek that wax sae sleek
As dreams o' luve come rushin'.
O aft and after, bonnie bird,
My fancies o'er thee huver ;
Gin thou but say that waefu' " nay,"
Then thou has' kill'd thy luver

June, 1901.

A SONNET ON "PARADISE LOST."

O HEAVENLY lays of holy bard divine !
O tale of seraphs fiery-wingèd : flown
From Milton's lips in gushing gorgeous tone
Waked by Urania, whom the tuneful Nine,
Sky-dyed, with Phœbus seated in a line
On Parnass high by gurgling Helicon,
Or Indian Vani on her lotus-throne,
Could hardly foil in grace of numbers fine !
More than Mæonidean songs ! ye lays
Deathless ! these ears how often did ye greet
With whispers from your Sion truth-ablaze !
How often did ye with your lightnings sweet
Lead forth these faltering mortal eyes to gaze
On deathless regions trod by deathless feet !

February, 1902.

TO A LYRIC POET.

HOW sweet! how sweet! how sweet!
The fountains of a lyric soul,
With rainbow hues aglow,
In diamond rillets flow—
In diamond rills of music fleet,
That bicker as they flash from knoll to knoll.

With what a charm divine
The pretty, pretty rimelets fall!
The pretty pretty rimes,
In merry silver chimes,
Full-foaming in that soul of thine,
Thou poet of the heart majestical.

O pour thee out, sweet bard
So Shelley-like! and let me know
What secret gush of thought
Hath been thy happy lot
To find, to guide, from dust to guard,
And sprinkle forth in such a fountain-flow.

Since buds my dawn did wake
Appear'd to thee "so fine and grand,"
And since thy muse divine
Scorn'd not to flatter mine,
Then take, O gifted comrade, take
This dewy wreath from thine own Roby's hand.

February, 1902.

TO A WORDSWORTHIAN.

WORDSWORTH! or who? I know not, friend,
In what rich language to extol
The music flowing from thy soul
In strains of perfect homely blend—

In strains of lusty native song,
That all the ways of Nature show,
And with a wealth of Fancy glow,
That I would have them linger long,

And cheer me with their gushing sound
(For sounds like these have cheer'd me still
And lent mine eager soul its fill
Of thought and dream and bliss profound),

And teach me all the glow divine
And all the "native feeling strong"
That bicker up like gold and throng
That tender tender heart of thine,

Sweet poet!—O how fain would I
Beside thee stay and lean mine ear
Unto thy wisdom flowing clear
In strains that, ringing, may not die;

So I could feel—if soul like this
Could catch the music of thy soul—
The echoes rich that from thee roll
In pure Wordsworthian mood of bliss.

February, 1902.

TO A POET-PAINTER.

O THOU, whose mellow-sounding whispers are
As of a leaf by Zephyr newly kiss'd,
Bright angel,—stay ; and, while the liquid breeze
Showers all its wealth of incense on thy locks
New-kindling into ringlets bright, accept
Such gift as from the rustic hand doth fall
In honour to a heavenly guest, that sings
Of joy Elysian in another sky,
Rich, lightning-like, serene, we know not what,
So fair and weird it seems ! accept, and touch
Once more with tune divine these trembling ears
That lean to catch thy song. Then, when my soul
Is steep'd in music flashing drop by drop
Into the sense enchanted, O arise,
Fair guest ; and in a cloud of golden fire
Wing upward to thy poet-painter's heaven,
And leave us, sons of earth, in wonder mute
Upgazing at thy fadeless form divine
And weeds of heavenly dye, which never change
With changes swift of ever-veering Time.

February, 1902

A PROTHALAMIUM.

A SECRET flash upon the lip—
A flicker in the soul within—
A glistening ray athwart the eye
Awaken'd by the jocund din—
A tender feeling that doth dip
The future in a rosy light
And send up unto Love on high
The worship of a heart-dew bright—
Such, such are thine; no frost may nip
The blossoms of this bridal day
That chain thee in a hallow'd tie
To her, thy heart's companion gay.

May, 1902.

A MELODY.

O SWEET the hymn and tune,
O sweet the song of June;
O mellow, mellow, mellow still
Flows the panting panting rill;
Over sand and over dune
Singing, ringing, dancing, glancing flows the rill,
Merrily, merrily, merrily down the hill

June, 1902.

CONSCIENCE.

SPEAK louder, louder to the trembling soul,
O Nymph Divine ; come, Harbinger of Truth,
Long-sought, long-flying Harbinger of Truth,
Come, let us nearer—nearer—face to face.
One flash of mellow lightning from thine eyes
Here shed upon the heart ; ah, cheat me not,
A weary wanderer in the paths of life,
A pilgrim faltering ; come, thine aid extend.
Thee, holy Nymph Divine, thee men adore—
Conscience thy name, Queen Duty's other self,
Thou Child of Will, thou mute yet solemn Voice,
God's Vicereine in the heart. O welcome thou !

November, 1902.

AN. OCEAN-SCENE.

NOW on the trembling main, half freak'd with stars,
Half garlanded with scuds of mangled weeds,
The light-blue waves, wallowing and weltering,
Make and remake deep hollows, intervolved
In volumes wide of flame-encumber'd foam
That topples over! Jove on Neptune smiles!

November, 1902.

ON TIBET.

DEEP in the bosom dark of mystery,
Housed in the gleam of days that are no more
And dreams that like her Himalayas soar
To height incredible—methinks I see
The land of mystic faith and llamas hoar!

A glamour thro' the creeping sunset steals,
Weird Tibet, o'er thy snow-encircled brow;
A glamour from the Occident, that now,
Silent, pursues thy gloom-engirdled heels,
Mother of fossil modes and customs thou!

Thou mighty miracle of centuries,
To us, the dwellers in the setting sun,
Perpetual dream-land, child of sunrise dun,
Who "teasest out of thought" man's memories,
Grim in thy glory, till thy race be run!

Land of the faith by pensive Buddha rear'd,—
Where thought is stable, prayers are roll'd by wheels,
Faith moves with a dull motion as she feels
Her way thro' gloom of births,—where Fate is fear'd
God is unknown, and man in darkness reels!

January, 1906.

AN IDEA.

(*An acrostic on an imaginary name*).

M eek and true thou art, O Marie,
A nd thy dear dominion's sweet;
R ustling thro' my heart, O fairy,
I can hear thy pinions beat,
E ven I, so nigh they meet.
F ree thy gaze; intense the kiss is
O f thy tempting lips aflame;
R are thy ways; immense the bliss is,
S o exempting slips from blame,
T o be by and sigh thy name.
E ver should divine devotion
R ouse my mood to thine emotion.

September, 1907.

TO BRITAIN.

(A quadruple virelay).

TO Britain, Queen of all the Seas,
Whose Alfred first did show her might,
Whose Nelson, strong and bold of sprite,
Did waft her fame from breeze to breeze,

The land where Cædmon saw the light,
Where Chaucer shaped his harmonies,
Whose Shakespeare fathom'd all that is,
Whose Milton rose to starry height,

To her whose light shall e'er increase,
Whose might in countless foemen's spite
From land to land shall spread aright,
Whose right to rule shall ne'er decrease.

To her who ever shall be bright,
I, prone to perish, offer these
Decaying, dying melodies,
I, rushing into endless night.

September, 1908.